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SPECIAL 2001
Philadelphia
Flower Show
Edition

GREEN scene

THE PENNSYLVANIA HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

FEBRUARY 2001 • \$5.00



A Conversation with Penelope Hobhouse
Flower Show Preview • The Art of Judging



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Cover Photo of 'Princess Irene' tulips by Charlie Heiser

GREEN scene

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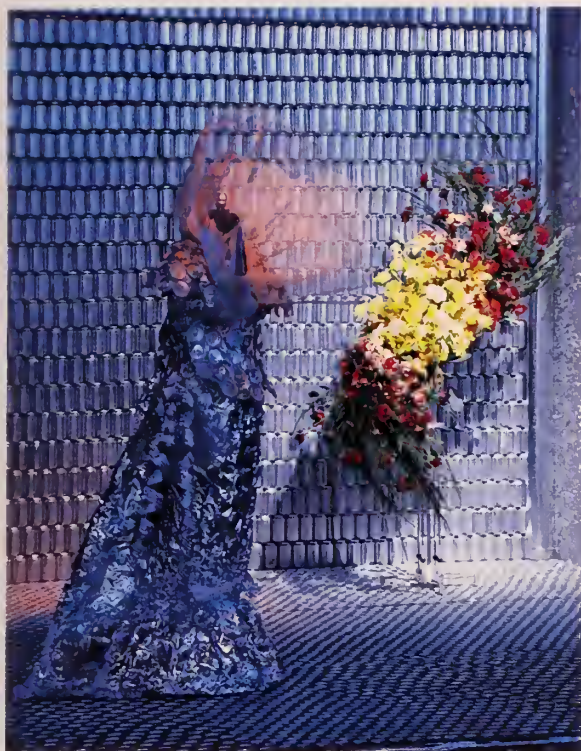
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For many of us, it's an annual pilgrimage to visit the Philadelphia Flower Show. It's quite another thing to actually be a part of it. Last year, for the first time, I joined the ranks of exhibitors when my garden club entered the "competitive classes" for the first time. It gave me a whole new perspective on this world-class event, but aside from that, it was just plain fun.

Our club, the Gardeners of Rose Valley, chose the highly competitive

the bend this time!") But we forged ahead, happy soldiers all of us. We had a plan—now it was time to make it happen.

The plan was to create the striking interior of a space ship travelling to a new homeworld, carrying the last traces of the Earth's aluminum. Within the Room would be a dazzling flower arrangement (essential to all Room class exhibits), a female figure in an all-metal evening gown, and walls and flooring

that would be completely clad in parts from aluminum soda cans.

We began gather-

ing soda cans—*thousands* of them. Club members began scouring recycling bins and drinking ungodly amounts of Diet Coke. In an amazing show of neighborly goodwill, the nearby borough of Swarthmore not only donated a truckload of empty cans, but also delivered them to our doorstep (during a snowstorm, no less).

We set up shop in the unheated back rooms of the Old Mill, a building in our town used for many community events.

and we had just entered the world's largest indoor flower show!

As we soon discovered, settling down to work was the best medicine for our pre-Show jitters. First, we brainstormed on the Room class theme, "Timeless Treasures," which fostered the notion that today's resources are tomorrow's treasures. What "treasure" would we use? Wood? Gems? Or something more abstract, like Time itself? Susan, our fearless leader, always likes a challenge, so she picked the element for us—aluminum. ("Aluminum?" we all thought, incredulously. "Susan's really gone 'round

With a heater cranked up to combat the 40°F temperatures inside, we set about taking apart cans and dividing the tops, rings, and sides into separate piles. Rotating crews of garden-club members began feverishly gluing aluminum parts to giant pieces of foamcore. Lids became the exhibit's floor, while halved cans (ones that were literally cut in half with metal shears) were used to create the back walls. Hot-glue guns were ablaze as the Show loomed closer and closer and, with fingers bandaged from metal cuts and glue burns, more than a few of us wondered, "Are we really going to make it?"

On another front, members were designing the all-aluminum dress from large rolls of aluminum foil. The "gown" was then draped around an antique-dress rack that would fall over at precisely the worst moment. Flowers were ordered for the arrangement that Susan would craft on the morning of judging. We also had to figure out how to cart the whole thing down to the Convention Center, how many vehicles it would take, and who would bring the donuts. Not since General Patton drove the 3rd Army across France in 1944 has a military campaign been so thoroughly planned...or so we felt.

With Zero Hour upon us, we loaded up the trucks at dawn and proceeded to Philadelphia. Walking onto the floor at 7am on the Friday before the Show is a wondrous experience, because you see the entire event being constructed right around you. You also realize that you're not the only garden club or exhibitor who's been working so hard—thousands of people from all over the Delaware Valley, and all over the country, have come to set up their exhibits, too. It's then that you realize just how big the Philadelphia Flower Show is.

We set our exhibit up in about three hours, with our metal-clad walls only falling down a few times. After a while, we gave up on gluing them in place and resorted to a few well-placed drywall screws. (As my mom used to say, "When in doubt...use force!") Next came the

continued on p.45

Taking the Plunge

"Rooms" class for our maiden voyage at the Show. Frankly, I didn't even know what the Rooms class was when we entered, but fortunately, we had a veteran leading our group, Susan Essick, who explained the ins and outs of competing to us tenderfoots. (Indeed, out of about 25 of us, she was the only one who had ever entered the Show before.) After her description, we were excited, but more than a little nervous. I mean, our garden club was only about three years old



Strange Beauty

Angelica gigas

The first time I saw *Angelica gigas*, I stopped mid-stride and said, "What is *that*?" This is a very common reaction. The tropical-looking plant grows to a towering height of 4 to 6 feet, with large, divided leaves of a bright, chartreuse green. In late summer, dark burgundy stems topped with rounded buds rise above the foliage. When the buds open, the large domes of dark burgundy flowers become bee magnets, attracting a large variety of pollinators that add to the spectacle.

Commonly known as Korean angelica, the plant is a newcomer to U.S. gardens. It was discovered by visitors to Seoul, Korea in 1984. Among them was Dr. Darrel Apps, horticulturist, plant

breeder, and owner of Woodside Nursery in Bridgeton, New Jersey. He recalls, "The plant was stunning, and I was impressed by its very unusual color and form. I thought it would be great in flower arrangements." Realizing the potential of this odd specimen, the visitors collected seeds. Back home, the new plant quickly became popular. Gardeners eagerly passed it along to their sometimes unsuspecting friends.

Hardy in Zones 5 through 8, Korean angelica does best in moist, fertile soil in a partly shaded setting. A biennial, it flowers and produces seed in its second year. The plant may self-sow heavily in an ideal location, but usually, offspring are not plentiful enough. Seeds tend to be short-lived, and, if collected, should be replanted promptly. Apps also explains that seedlings sometimes come up too early and are damaged by spring frost. Yet, he says, the plant is definitely worth trying: "It can really make a phenomenal show because it is unique."

Be sure to site Korean angelica properly and choose large companions like shrubs or ornamental grasses, neither of which would be dwarfed by the scale and drama of this rather outrageous plant. Just remember: be brave, be daring, and be prepared to answer the question, "What is *that*?"

—Debbie Moran

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Yellowjackets at work pollinating *Angelica gigas*.

Pete Prown

TWISTED. If you find yourself out for a mid-winter walk on the campus of Swarthmore College, home of the Scott Arboretum, it will be hard to miss the giant, cocoon-like knots of twisting branches that cling to an American linden tree in front of Trotter Hall. But this is not the work of Mother Nature. Environmental artist **Patrick Dougherty** created the 45-foot-tall piece, *Abracadabra*, using branches of maple, elm, dogwood, and crab apple collected from an area being cleared in Tyler Arboretum, near Media, PA.

Dougherty, 55, has created over 100 such site-specific works. He typically collects plant materials from places where their removal doesn't harm—and sometimes helps—the local environment. Swarthmore's art department and the Scott Arboretum jointly commissioned the sculpture, made possible by a grant from the William J. Cooper Foundation. *Abracadabra* was installed in September and will be in place for about a year—depending, of course, on Mother Nature.



Diane Mattis, courtesy of The Scott Arboretum

FEBRUARY BLOOMS. Longing for a little color during the long winter months? In *Jane Pepper's Garden* (Camino Books), you'll find a tip for getting an early taste of spring. Branches of forsythia and other early-blooming trees and shrubs, such as cher-

continued on page 8



Sunflowers for Aimee

From Tragedy to Triumph in North Philadelphia

On June 20, 1996, several children playing tag in a vacant lot in North Philadelphia found the body of Aimee Willard. She was a 22-year-old college student from Delaware County who had been kidnapped, beaten, and murdered, her body then dumped in the trash-strewn lot. The case attracted extensive media coverage throughout the region, as it took police 18 months to arrest a suspect. But four years later, the corner where Aimee was found has now been transformed from a symbol of urban despair into a garden that's brought hope to the surrounding community.

The Hope Park Garden in Memory of Aimee Willard, located at 16th & Indiana Streets, is so remarkable that it took first prize in one of the community-garden categories of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's 2000 City Gardens Contest.

Two years in the making, the garden was the brain child of community activist Doris Phillips, executive director of HEROs Inc. (Helping Energize and Rebuild Ourselves), a non-profit organization that runs after-school programs for neighborhood youth. She saw this empty lot as an opportunity to create something positive in response to the tragedy.

While the garden wasn't easy to build, Doris says she wanted to teach the young

people an important lesson: that with determination, anything is possible. "All you have to do is ask," she says. And ask she did. First, she formed a working group of HERO volunteers called "Young Minds of the Future." With little or no gardening experience, Doris and fellow volunteers participated in the Garden Tenders "Basic Training" course offered by PHS and attended follow-up workshops run by our Philadelphia Green program. She also enlisted the help of neighbors, the City, several municipal unions, the Fire Department, SEPTA, the Boy Scouts, the Penn State Urban Gardening Program, workers from the Adult Probation Department, Home Depot and *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. To cap it all off, Ana Uribe, an artist from the City's Mural Arts program, painted a striking mural of giant sunflowers—Aimee Willard's favorite flower.

Once a vacant lot and scene of a horrific crime, this peaceful garden now serves as the spot for neighborhood meetings and barbecues, and was even the site of a recent wedding. In addition to thriving flower beds, the block-long garden boasts a gazebo and a memorial walkway. Doris says it has definitely had a big impact on the neighborhood and has been an inspiration for the young people involved. In fact, Miranda Pridgen, the 14-year-old girl who designed the garden, now plans to become an architect.

Perhaps Lynne Kosobucki, one of the City Gardens Contest judges, put it best. "The saying goes that life began in a garden," she wrote in her notes, "and I think this garden is bringing life to its neighborhood."

—Jane Carroll



Volunteers at Aimee's Garden: (left to right) Doris Phillips, Joel Spivak, Cynthia Brown, and Darlene Crawford.

Apricots on the Roof

"Not only shouldn't it be here, it shouldn't be alive," says an astounded Hal Rosner of Bartlett Tree Experts, while gazing at an apricot tree growing in South Philadelphia. "This is a real treasure."

Topographical maps show that this area of the city was originally a swamp that was later filled in with rubble and covered with houses. The soil is practically dead for horticultural purposes, but Rosner thinks the health of the tree is due to some source of nourishment far under the soil, perhaps an old creek bed or an abandoned privy, which would have been common in the neighborhood decades ago.

According to homeowner Alex Soroka (pictured here picking apricots off the roof of his townhouse), "The tree was here when I bought the house. It was just something in the back and I didn't think much of it until it bore fruit. With just a little watering and minor maintenance—like trimming a few branches and cleaning up the debris around the trunk—it really took off. Now I think of it as part of my home."

Apricot cultivation is known to go back at least 4,000 years to China and later to the Mediterranean. Their entry into the U.S. occurred in 1629 in Virginia, though now 97% are grown in California's San Joaquin Valley. However, there is a microclimate of sorts in South Philadelphia, making the area a bit warmer than the surrounding Delaware Valley—pecan trees, figs, camellias, and other warm-climate plants often turn up in protected yards.

Still, Rosner doubts that the tree was deliberately planted, as there is no sense in planting a semi-tropical in an area of snow and freezing temperatures. "I'm inclined to think that it was a visiting seedpit," he speculates. "It probably grew out of the garbage or some other compost that was left behind this house. Amazingly, this apricot tree has surpassed the specimen's average lifespan, which is less than 50 years. Honestly, I haven't even seen them this big in orchards."

—Steve Maurer



ry and crabapple, can be coaxed into bloom indoors. Forsythia and pussy willows respond especially well: cut a few branches and place them in water in a cool, dimly lit location. This encourages buds to open slowly.

Four-Season Reading. February is a good time to catch up on your reading, do a little armchair gardening, and start planning for spring. Pamela J. Harper's new book, **Time Tested Plants: Thirty Years in a Four-Season Garden** (Timber Press, hardcover, \$39.95), is useful on all three counts. Arranged by the seasons, the book concentrates on those plants that "have proved their long-term worth in beauty and adaptability for a decade or more." The book contains 250 color photographs—all but two of them taken in Harper's two-acre Virginia garden—that beautifully illustrate the author's breadth of garden know-how. With hardiness maps for North America as well as Europe, a source list, bibliography, and index, this is a wonderful resource for experienced and beginning gardeners alike.



Music to Garden By. Or is that, "garden music to buy." If you like to listen to music as you hoe, prune, weed and seed, you're in luck. Incentive Media LLC has teamed with the National Gardening Association to produce *Garden Music*, a pair of 3-CD sets just for gardeners. The two compilations, "Flower Collection" and "Herb Collection," include music by 15 classical composers, such as Debussy, Mozart, Handel, Tchaikovsky, and Vivaldi. Even better, part of the proceeds support youth gardening programs across the country. *Garden Music* is available through Amazon.com, Myseasons.com, and the company's own web site, Gardenmusic.com. It will also be sold at garden centers, gift shops, and catalogs.

Kudos. Philadelphia's **Shofuso Japanese House & Garden** has been named one of the top 10 Japanese gardens located outside Japan by *The Journal of Japanese Gardening*. The Japanese House, located near the Horticulture Center in Fairmount Park (site of PHS's annual Philadelphia Harvest Show), was selected from a list of 300 traditional Japanese gardens outside of Japan. The two-acre garden, designed by Sano Tansai, features diverse plantings, sculptures, pathways, a cascading waterfall, and a large pond. The Shofuso Japanese House was presented as a gift to the City of Philadelphia in 1957. [*Shofuso House is located in West Fairmount Park, near the intersection of Montgomery and Belmont Avenues. It is open from May until October.*]



ASK A GARDENER

by Garden Q & A Volunteers

Pete Prown



The hybrid rugosa rose, 'Therese Bugnet'

I would like to prune my rugosa roses and have read that I can prune it back hard. Is this true? Would you suggest pruning it to the ground in mid-March?

Kelly D. Wilson, Reston, VA

Each year, prune lightly before spring growth begins (March–early April), mostly in order to remove dead wood. Also thin out tangled or congested branch areas. On established plants, remove one or two of the oldest canes at the ground each year to promote vigorous new shoots. It would, however, be a bit chancy to cut the whole plant almost to the ground.

Is it possible to transplant hydrangea bushes in spring?

Louise Juska, Richboro, PA

Yes, you can transplant hydrangeas. It may separate into more than one plant when you dig it up, but just plant these and you will have more plants. If it does separate, however, you may not get flowers the first year after transplanting.

I saw a gorgeous southern magnolia growing in Cherry Hill, NJ. Do these trees do well on the Main Line?

Hedy Cohen, Bala Cynwyd, PA

Southern magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*) is marginally hardy in the Delaware Valley. However, many gardeners have had success when planting a specimen in full sun in a protected location, such as the south wall of a building. A mature specimen can reach a height of 50 feet. This is a tree that will not grow well in shade, however.

If you're looking for other trees and woody specimens that grow well in this area, read up on the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's Gold Medal Award plants. Cultural information and sources for these plants can be found at: www.libertynet.org/phs.

Do you have a question for our horticultural experts? If so, contact PHS's Garden Q & A phone line in the McLean Library, which is open Monday-Friday, 9:30-noon. Phone (215) 988-8777; fax (215) 988-8783; email: askagardener@pennhort.org

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THE **INSIDE** STORY

Show designer Ed Lindemann gives us a personal tour of the 2001 Philadelphia Flower Show

by Dorothy Wright

There is a story behind every garden, and that's just as true at the Philadelphia Flower Show. As told through this year's Central Feature theme, "Great Gardeners of the World," the stories behind this year's Show are a fascinating, superbly illustrated anthology: part history, part mystery, part fantasy, and part science.



Facing page: The Waldor Orchids exhibit from the 2000 Philadelphia Flower Show.

THE INSIDE STORY

"The idea for this year's theme came out of my training and experience as a garden designer," says Flower Show director and designer, Ed Lindemann. "Garden design is very personal. When gardeners talk about their designs, it is not only about *what* they have done, but also *why* they have done it. Learning the thought process—the story—behind a garden is as interesting as looking at the results."

IN THE BEGINNING

Appropriately, the Central Feature starts at the beginning, as Flower Show visitors step through a gateway to view the cascading water pools of ancient Egypt. "Modern garden design as we know it began 5,000 years ago along the Nile River," Lindemann explains. "Most people know that the ancient Egyptians built irrigation canals to channel water from the river to their crops, but they may not know that the canals themselves evolved into an important design element of ornamental gardens."

There was no end to their creativity. "They channeled water into courtyard gardens, creating series of cascading pools—the beginning of fountains," says Lindemann.

The entrance feature is sure to capture the imagination. "It pulls people into the show with a lot of razzle-dazzle and theater," Lindemann promises. "The Central Feature is like a stage. People don't want to go and see the same performance every year; they want it to be different."

AN "ENGLISH" GARDEN?

Next, visitors will turn to Penelope Hobhouse's exhibit, which is inspired by the garden at her home in Dorset,

England. "She is the ultimate English gardener, and one of the great gardeners of the world," says Lindemann, explaining why he asked Hobhouse to participate in the Central Feature. "I consider her to be the garden designer from abroad who has had the most influence on contemporary American gardeners. Also, I knew from her writings that she isn't only a designer—she is a true plant person, and I knew it would be interesting to find out why she did what she did in her garden."

Many Flower Show visitors will be looking for a thatched-roofed English cottage, a little picket fence, and roses galore. "But they are in for a surprise," Lindemann says. "When Penelope and her late husband, John Malins, renovated their old coach house, they transformed it into a contemporary home with expanses of glass looking out on a formal garden with a rolling lawn. In the summer of the second year, a drought occurred, and the lawn browned out. What do you think she did?"



A scale model of the upcoming IPM exhibit for the 2001 Show.



The 2000 offering from The Rock Garden Society



Last year's displays from Burke Brothers (top) and Styer's Nursery (bottom).

For eager readers who can never wait 'til the mystery is solved, here's a sneak peek at the last page. "Penelope tore out the lawn and replaced it with gravel, and re-planted it as a Mediterranean-style xeriscape," Lindemann says. "She retained the same classical, formal plan, but everything is blowsy and waving in the breeze. That's a fascinating story: a garden that was transformed because it wasn't adapting to its environmental conditions. She's really invented a whole new kind of English garden."

A FANTASY COME TO LIFE

For the Flower Show debut of Chanticleer, the pleasure garden in Wayne, PA, Lindemann says its executive director and designer, Chris Woods, wanted an exhibit that would be "over the top . . . and it is."

The inspiration is the new ruin that is now the hub of the gardens at Chanticleer. "I think of a ruin as a desolate place, and I wondered why Woods would make it part of a pleasure garden. Then he told me the story. Chris said, 'I grew up in post-World War II London,

and my playgrounds were the ruins of bombed churches. Those were my happy childhood days.'"

Working with set designers SMRD Theatricals, Woods and Lindemann developed a design for the Central Feature that is pure fantasy. "Thanks to the financial support of the board of directors of Chanticleer, we have been able to do things with this exhibit that we have never been able to do before," Lindemann says.

Garden paths wind uphill and down, leading to the suggestion of a ruined castle. A live dancer leaps among the spires. His video image is projected onto various backdrops, including a waterfall, which flows under a bridge and submerges the legendary city of Atlantis. "Everywhere you look, something is happening," Lindemann says. "And there are unique plant combinations that, to me, give Chanticleer its distinction. Chris uses plants the way an artist uses paint."

EVERYONE A "GREAT GARDENER"

While visitors look forward to dazzling exhibits, they also come to the Show to learn. The science of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is explored in the Central Feature exhibit by 12 horticultural partners from the region.

"This exhibit represents a small neighborhood with clustered housing, single family houses, and a park," Lindemann explains. "Visitors walk through the neighborhood, learning the rationale and techniques of IPM and healthful gardening. When they leave, they will receive a brochure that recaps the reasons behind these approaches and a certificate that declares each person one of the 'Great Gardeners of the World.'"

AROUND THE HALL

Of course, the Central Feature is only one aspect of the "Major Exhibitors" section of the Show. Among the other highlights are the return of two former exhibitors, Winterthur and the Burpee Company, both of whom were intrigued by the possibilities of this year's theme.

Winterthur will feature "The Enchanted Woods," inspired by the children's garden currently under construction at its site in Wilmington, DE. "When I saw it, I said, 'It's going to be hard to keep the adults out,'" Lindemann reflects. "It is not what one typically thinks of as a children's garden. It has great ambiance, elegance, and tranquility. At the Flower Show, adults and children alike will have the opportunity to explore it."

In celebration of its 125th anniversary, the Burpee Company will tell its story, "... from W. Atlee Burpee's early days as a chicken farmer through the present-day Burpee Company stores, serving the great gardeners of the world past, present and future," Lindemann says.




OVER THE BACK FENCE

Beyond the major exhibits are some 330 different categories in the "Competitive Class" section; the Marketplace for shopping; and the popular American Gardener Series. This extensive section of the Show features culinary events, a Gardener's Bookstore, and the American Gardener's Backyard, a huge area of live gardening demonstrations in the Convention Center's Train Shed.

"Our surveys showed that visitors wanted to talk one-on-one with experts about their garden questions and problems," Lindemann says. "So we came up

with a venue in which vendors and organizations share their expertise. It's an informal gathering place for gardeners to chat."

For novice and seasoned gardeners alike, the 2001 Philadelphia Flower Show will dazzle, surprise, delight and, just as important, educate. "I want everyone to learn something new about gardening every year," Lindemann says. "Then I feel that we've done our job." 

Dorothy Wright last wrote about Eve and Per Thyrum's garden in the December 2000 issue.

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THE *New* ENGLISH GARDEN

Penelope Hobhouse recreates her Dorset garden at the Philadelphia Flower Show

By Marban M. Sparkman



"I'm thrilled to exhibit at the Flower Show. This seems very exciting to me," says Penelope Hobhouse about plans for her garden exhibit at the 2001 Philadelphia Flower Show. Gardener, historian, author, and plantswoman extraordinaire, Hobhouse has designed gardens all over the world in the course of her 40-year career. According to Philadelphia Flower Show Director, Ed Lindemann, no other British gardener has had a stronger impact on contemporary American gardens, making her a natural fit for this year's theme, "Great Gardeners of the World." Unbelievably, Hobhouse has never before participated in a flower show.

Inspired by this new horticultural challenge, Hobhouse was determined to do something special for her Philadelphia Flower Show debut. Her design for the Central Feature is a recreation of a part of her own garden in Dorset, England. In a recent telephone interview, she talked with enthusiasm about her plans for the exhibit and about her home garden itself: "I was 63 when I moved here, and my design plan at the time was to really do what suited me. It's all to do with my writing, my designs for other people, and what I really wanted myself, so it's been a fantastic experience. I'm very, very happy with the garden and I'm happy living here. And I think it is a wonderful opportunity to be able to reproduce a part of it for the Flower Show."

Hobhouse moved to Dorset seven years ago and recalls, "It was completely thrilling because I could make my own garden from scratch." The property offered one particularly appealing feature: a 1/2 acre of ground surrounded by walls and attached to the side of the house like an outdoor room. That is the space—now an intimate walled garden—that Mrs. Hobhouse will recreate for the Flower Show. The remaining 1/2 acre of property beyond the walls is "quite a different sort of green garden which looks out on the landscape," she says. "I really have two separate gardens. That suits me very well because I love the feeling of enclosure in the walled area and yet I can look out on the wilder, very beautiful countryside. A pity we can't bring that with us as well to Philadelphia."

Structure, foremost, then light, shade, and texture are the primary design considerations for Hobhouse. She is emphatic about the need to "frame your color garden with either architecture or plants." In Dorset she did both. The walls provided architectural structure, and their sharp angles dictated a formal design. After extensive soil preparation, she began by planting a leafy framework of small trees and shrubs tracing the architectural perimeter. Lacy-leaved *Robinia* trees—sheared into "lollipops"—and tightly clipped hedges of box and yew echo the vertical strength of the walls and outline the straight paths which frame the interior garden.

"I think that when you're establishing a new garden, far more important than get-

ring flowers is to get light and shade," Hobhouse notes. "When I came to Dorset, there was absolutely nothing here. There wasn't one single tree. The first thing I did was try to create a situation where you would walk from shade into sunshine and vice versa. That's really more important than seeing more flowers. Of course, I love flowers too, but you *can* do without them."

Hobhouse describes the whole as "a formal garden in layout, with quite a lot of architectural plants. But in fact," she says, "the planting inside the structure is very informal." The clipped forms and straight lines of the foliage framework barely contain the mass of perennials, annuals, and tender shrubs that grow together in mounds and spikes overflowing onto the pathway. Tall, sheared yew cones and fat, round boxwood balls punctuate an otherwise carefree sprawl of texture accenting the subtle gradations of mauve, pink, and gray in the interior garden. This is her dis-

tinctive style, described by one admirer as "abundant and varied planting within a formal structure."

"Foliage plants shape a garden and establish its structure," says Hobhouse, who chooses plants for the interior border with the same emphasis on texture and architectural strength that she requires in the perimeter. Colewort (*Crambe cordifolia*), with its huge rough cabbage-shaped leaves, needs no staking and contributes that architectural quality often lacking in flowering border plants. Honey bush (*Melianthus major*) is a shrub with steel gray, pinnate leaves that adds a dramatic element. The tough sword-shaped leaves of mountain flax (*Phormium cookianum*) and the strong vertical lines of *Acanthus mollis* contrast with bushier plants and shrubs. Such variations of form and texture tease the eye throughout the garden.

"It is really a sort of Mediterranean plant garden," Hobhouse continues. "There are

lots of sun-loving euphorbias and plants with aromatic foliage." There are several varieties of spurges ranging from the 4-foot-tall *Euphorbia characias wulfenii* to the trailing *Euphorbia myrsinites* that flows over the pathways. Mexican orange blossom (*Choisya ternata*) is a 4-foot shrub that produces scented flowers—like orange blossoms—in spring. Jerusalem sage (*Phlomis fruticosa*) and cardoon (*Cynara cardunculus*) add a silvery gray element. Mauve pink geraniums (*Geranium palmarum*) and lady's mantle (*Alchemilla mollis*)—a Hobhouse favorite—are staples in the garden. Other favorites are gaura (*Gaura lindheimeri* "Whirling Butterflies") with its pink flowers and gray-green leaves, and varieties of *Allium*. A mulch of pebbles covers the whole garden, "creating a feeling of heat and sunshine."

The plants are not strictly native to the Mediterranean. Some are exotic, but many of them are familiar. Working from Mrs. Hobhouse's plant list, John Story of Meadowbrook Farm has collected and grown—sometimes from seed—all of the plants she will be using for the Flower Show. In some cases he had to suggest substitutes for tender evergreen shrubs that were not available here. Mrs. Hobhouse, who will be coming here in March to oversee the installation of the garden, has the can-do spirit of a Flower Show gardener, new as she is to the art form. She says, "As long as I get the same look, I will be very, very happy."

This is not a typical English garden scheme. England, like our own region, has recently been experiencing a period of drought, and Hobhouse is mindful of that when choosing plant material. She is quick to admit that she hates "irrigating" and always gardens with an eye on climatic conditions.

"Wherever you garden you should try to garden with the climate. You should grow drought-resistant plants so you don't have to water all the time. I think this Mediterranean garden is very suitable for anyplace where there is a hot dry summer. All the plants in the garden would

A panoramic view of Hobhouse's garden and home, which is known as the Coach House.




All photos by Andrew Lawson

PENELOPE'S PLANTS

tolerate a normal East Coast summer, which is very hot."

It was just such practical considerations that led to the use of the gravel mulch throughout Hobhouse's garden. When drought killed off the original grass on the paths, she replaced it with the pebbles, which she highly recommends: "I hope people will think of the gravel as a very practical mulch which actually keeps in the moisture, keeps down the weeds, and looks very attractive. It saves you having to edge your lawn borders because the gravel goes right on into the bed. And it's still quite formal because the paths are more or less straight with plants falling over the sides. I hope people will see how simple that is."

Hobhouse's garden in Dorset, like all gardens, is a work in progress. As the structural planting matures and the tender shrubs grow together, she foresees a time when the walled garden will become more formal, relying mainly on foliage textures and tightly clipped forms with some bulbs and self-seeding annuals, but fewer perennials and annuals grown from seed. She strives to keep the walled garden always looking perfect, but "one of the things about gardening is that if you can get your garden looking perfect one year, that is just the time you will have to change it because the next year it won't be [perfect]. You can't repeat it. That's the great challenge of gardening—you have to keep changing it all the time."

Penelope Hobhouse's garden for the Philadelphia Flower Show will capture one perfect moment in time—a sunny May day in a garden exuding a Mediterranean atmosphere, designed by one of the "great gardeners of the world," for her own pleasure, and offered to us for all the wisdom it contains. "I just hope people will think it is beautiful. That is really very important to me." 

The author, a frequent contributor to *Green Scene* and a Flower Show volunteer, looks forward to welcoming Mrs. Hobhouse to Philadelphia.

In reproducing her Dorset garden at the Philadelphia Flower Show, Penelope Hobhouse has chosen a wide variety of shrubs, trees, annuals, perennials, and subtropicals to display, many of them familiar to the Mid-Atlantic gardener. Here is a plant list for the exhibit and—lest you thought she was having them shipped over from the UK—we can divulge that they were forced for her exhibit at Meadowbrook Farm under the careful eyes of John Story and his colleagues.

Shrubs & Trees

Buxus sp. (boxwood)
Taxus baccata (English yew)
Robinia pseudoacacia 'Umbraculifera'

Annuals

Ageratum 'Blue Horizon'
Ammi majus
Centaurea cineraria
Cerinth major purpurascens
Cleome hassleriana
Foeniculum vulgare 'Purpureum'
Pelargonium sidoides
Helichrysum petiolatum
Helichrysum thianschanicum
Malva sylvestris alba
Nicotiana langsdorffii
Nigella hispanica
Senecio viravina

Perennials

Acanthus mollis
Ajuga reptans 'Purpurea'
Alchemilla mollis
Anaphalis margaritacea
Aquilegia chrysantha (columbine)
Artemisia absinthium 'Lambrook Silver'
Ballota pseudodictamnus
Campanula lactiflora 'Pritchard's Variety'
Clematis recta
Crambe cordifolia
Dierama pulcherrimum
Eryngium planum 'Blaukappe'
Eryngium 'Sapphire Blue' (sea holly)
Euphorbia 'Amjilassa'
E. dulcis 'Chamaeleon'
E. characias wulfenii
E. cyparissias 'Orange Man'
E. 'Jade Dragon'
E. lathyris
E. longifolia
E. myrsinites
E. schillingii

Guara lindheimeri
Leymus arenarius
Miscanthus sinensis
Iris ensata variegata
Lavandula heterophylla
Lychnis coronaria
Nepeta 'Six Hills Giant' (catmint)
Nepeta 'Walker's Low'
Onopordum acanthium
Perovskia atriplicifolia (Russian sage)
Phlomis fruticosa 'Grand Verde'
 (Jerusalem sage)
Phlomis russeliana
Phuopsis
Salix elaeagnos (rosemary willow)
Salvia officinalis
Salvia officinalis 'Purpurascens'
Santolina chamaecyparissus
Sisyrinchium striatum
Stachys byzantina 'Big Ears' (lamb's ears)
Thalictrum flavum glaucum
 (meadow rue)
Verbascum olympicum (mullein)

Subtropicals

Choisia ternata
Choisia ternata 'Sundance'
Cistus ladanifer
Cynara cardunculus
Erysimum 'Bowles' Mauve'
Euryops pectinatus
Geranium palmatum
Geranium maderense
Melianthus major
Phormium cookianum
Romneya coulteri



1



2



3



4

1. A close-up view of *Verbena bonariensis* 2. An example of Michael's unusual method of binding tall grasses 3. One of many ornaments, this birdhouse stands amidst a hydrangea (background) and purple castor bean (foreground, *Ricinus* sp.) 4. The artful gardener in his element

WITH Art AT ITS HEART

The Gardens of Michael Petrie

By Deborah Fuchs

Michael Petrie's exhibits at the Philadelphia Flower Show constantly astound me. Remember the stacks of clay pots, the tires, the sand castles, and the picture frames? They were all the work of Michael Petrie, the Puckish retail manager at J. Franklin Styer Nurseries, whose extraordinary designs are always the talk of the Show. But what does his own garden look like? Does he even have one? He does, and you can find it not far from the center of Swarthmore borough, about 10 miles west of Philadelphia.

In Michael's garden, humor runs rampant. Odd, assorted objects from past Styer's exhibits catch the eye. You'll find sunflowers made from old tires, as well as colorful bottles, rusty bikes, and other bits of discarded trash. You'll also find a garden that reveals an artistic eye and conveys a playful spirit. You'll find a garden with heart.

What distinguishes this garden from theirs? For one thing, huge grasses overflow the narrow strip between the sidewalk and the street. These grasses are bunched and wrapped into strange forms—in fact, the Japanese silver grasses (*Miscanthus sinensis*) remind me of giant octopi. More than that, these curb-



"The best planning that goes on in my garden happens when I look at it from the third floor window of my house."

side creatures perfectly capture the essence of Michael's garden. They're humorous and unconventional. Where did he get the idea? "Nothing in particular gave me the idea," Michael says nonchalantly. "I just got tired of dealing with ornamental grasses and tired of cutting them off. And then you have to pick up all the junk in winter. If you have 10 big grasses, you have a pickup-truck full of debris."

Michael doesn't compost and he can't dump the grass debris anywhere on his property. So instead, he got some bailing twine and began to wrap the grasses. Using a piece of twine about 4-feet long, he'd grab a bunch, wrap, and twist. Grab a bunch, wrap, and twist. Before long he noticed the grass was taking on an interesting form. "It was like making a basket," he reflects. Michael also found if he pulled the bunch to the left as he wrapped, the grass would go to the left. If he pulled to the right, it would go to the right. Soon a spider-like shape emerged, a shape that moved in the breezes and animated the garden. In Michael's garden, things like this just happen by instinct and invention.

Moving past the grasses that guard the entrance to his large, rectangular side

WITH *Art* AT ITS HEART

yard, you enter a grassy room. It's furnished with a pond, table, and chairs. Strong curved lines lead the eye around this first room, then through a narrow

walkway enclosed with tall perennials, and finally to another garden room at the far back. An old shed sits to the left of the back room, while an old garage, used as a dairy in the early 1900s, sits to the right.

Architectural plants dominate and enclose the garden. Plume poppy (*Macleaya cordata*) and giant reed grass (*Arundo donax*) rise to the second-story window, masking the side of the house and melding the former farmhouse with the earth. The central bed, which divides the garden into two rooms, is edged with small boxwood and filled with hydrangeas, cannas, Tatarian aster (*Aster tataricus*), and an

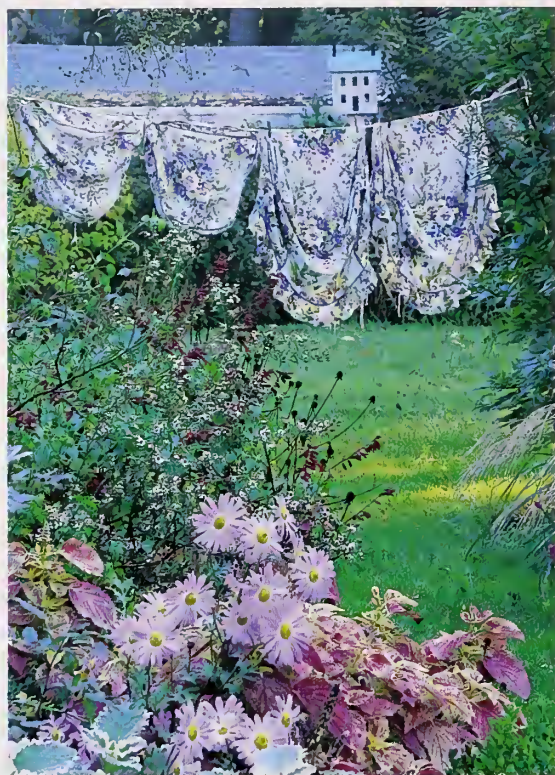
assortment of other plants. The garden overflows with myriad textures, forms and colors.

Petrie, however, doesn't have a formal plan. "It kind of works like this," he said. "You get the plants. You plant them. You watch what they do, and then you move them. The best planning that goes on in my garden happens when I look out the window from the third floor of my house."

The garden began with a single shrub planted in the center of the lawn. Michael added a few plants to complement it, then a few more. Soon, that first bed grew until he needed another for balance and proportion. Next, came the long narrow bed that follows the line of the house.

Michael is interested in line, in how his eye moves from one part of the garden to the other. "That's what gardening is like—like carving up a big green carpet into shapes. As your eye moves along these shapes, they pick up the colors and textures in the middle of the beds."

Line, proportion, texture, and color are important principles for Petrie, but he says the most important element in a garden is heart. A garden should reveal the gardener. If it doesn't, it is like cold interior design for outdoor plants. "Drive down any street in America and you can tell who 'the gardeners' are and who they aren't," notes Michael. "You can tell who has planted for reasons other than gardening, like keeping up with



Top left: Hanging slipcovers complement the artful colors in Michael's garden. **Top right:** *Rosa* 'Mary Rose' **Bottom:** A rusty air vent becomes a decorative element when paired with goldenrod (*Solidago* 'Golden Fleece'), a juniper topiary and reed grass (*Arundo donax*).

the Joneses and being like everyone else. Then you've got the guy who's having fun like me. If somebody walks around my yard and smiles, that's what it's all about."


It's difficult not to smile in Michael's garden. Humor is everywhere. The sense of play is most evident in his choice of ornaments. There are plenty of birdhouses. That's not uncommon, but there are also beehouses, old tools, stop signs, industrial metal spools, and objects I can't even identify. Never static, the ornaments often change, move about the garden, or disappear all together.

On my first visit, a rusty shovel, minus its handle, sat on a post near the pond. Flowering hostas surrounded the post, creating a strong and attractive focal point. On my second visit the shovel and post were gone. In their place, a bird-

house lay on its side at the water's edge. What happened to the shovel? "The kids probably threw it into the pond," said Michael. Too bad, I thought, it looked nice there. "It doesn't matter what the object is," says Michael. "It could be this pen. It's how you put that pen down in relation to everything else that makes a big difference. How the light hits it. What the shape is and how it relates to the plants."

In the distance towards the back of the garden, old-fashioned slipcovers just washed for this year's Flower Show hung on the line to dry. Their colorful print captured my attention. I noticed how the large, pink cabbage roses on the slipcovers picked up the shape and color of nearby mums. The effect was enchanting. I still don't know if Michael hung the slipcovers with artistic intent, but I

do know that this year he's designing Flower Show exhibits for Styer's, Burpee, Winterthur, and the Men's Garden Club of Philadelphia. Where the slipcovers will end up is a mystery. Perhaps in none of them. His ideas are always changing.

"The best ideas happen when you develop the ability to let go," concludes Michael. "Anything that comes into your mind as an idea needs to be exercised in some way. If you edit your ideas, you might get three a week. If you don't edit, you get a hundred a day. This principle applies to my garden, as well as to the Flower Show. It doesn't matter what an exhibit is or what it looks like. What matters is the viewer's reaction. If I get an emotional response from somebody, then I've been successful. It doesn't matter if the reaction is good or bad, so long as the exhibit is remembered." 



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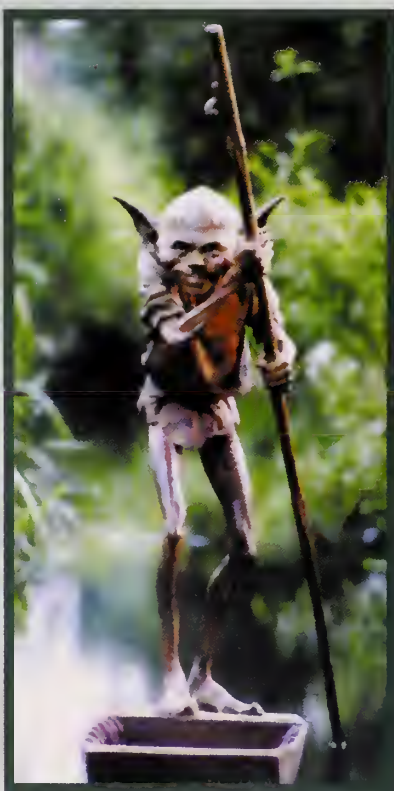
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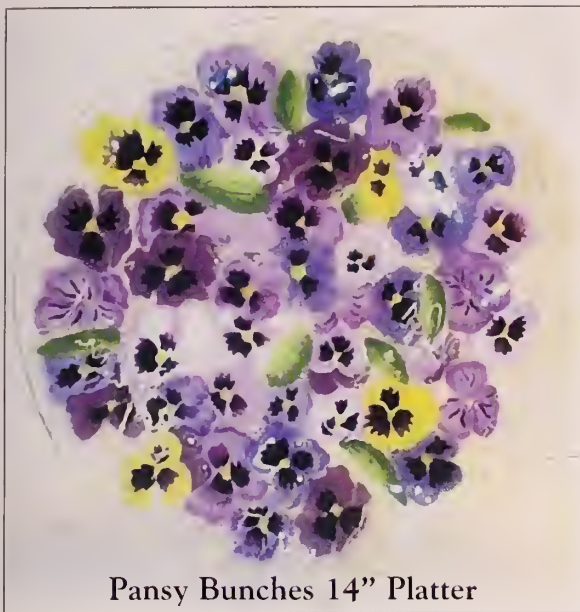
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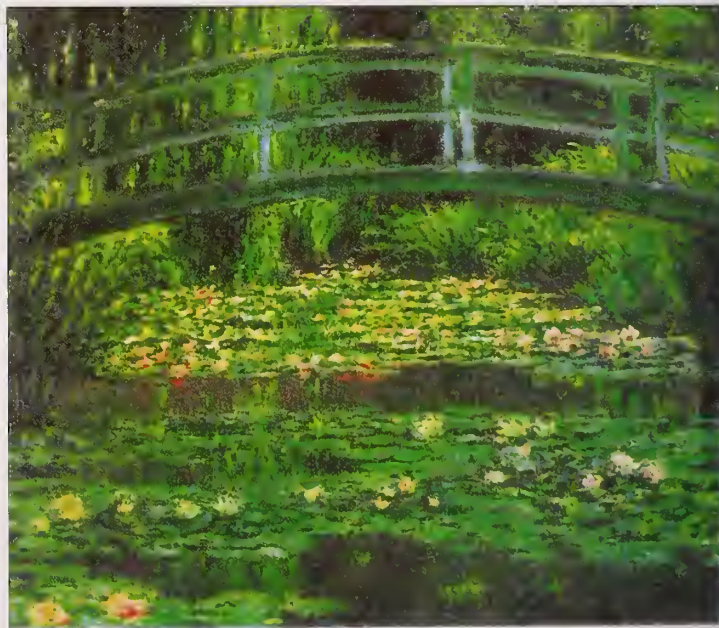
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Beginner's Luck

A Tale of Two Flower Show Newcomers

by Judy McKeon

What's it like to enter the Philadelphia Flower Show for the first time? True, it can seem rather daunting. But for two novices we spoke to, joining the Show has not only proved a great creative challenge, but also a rewarding experience that lets them hone their gardening skills all year 'round.

In her debut as an exhibitor at the 1999 Philadelphia Flower Show, Shelby Fraser took a second-place ribbon as a novice in the Medium Niche class. Initially a bit intimidated, Shelby commented on her surprise victory, "I was so excited that I could exhibit at the largest flower show in the world—and then to win a ribbon on top of that. It was a thrill."

Excited by the competition and encouraged by her success, Shelby—a photographer and owner of Sweet Peas Flowers in Philadelphia—returned to the 2000 Show and tripled her entries with three Niche designs. In a departure from her first year's entry, which

won with a simple Asian style, Shelby went all out at her second Show. Alas, her entries captured no accolades and, looking back, Shelby is keenly aware of the irony implicit in her experience. Fortunately, she's not in it for the ribbons. To her, it's more about creative expression.

For Shelby, working within a specific space represents

both the challenge and the satisfaction of artistic achievement in design competition. "I like the challenge of thinking about a theme and then running with it. It reminds me of art school projects that are intellectually and visually challenging, but the materials are different. Here, I'm using



Shelby Fraser whipping up an arrangement

Roses in bloom in
Charlie Heiser's home garden.





Shelby's 2000 Defined Space entry, titled "Eclipse" (left), and her 1999 Medium Niche Exhibit, "Reflections" (right).



Shelby Fraser

"I'm a prime example of someone who never entered before, yet I won six ribbons."
—Charlie Heiser

living things. Ultimately, I'm interested in how all of it works within the space."

Shelby attended the Niche workshops that PHS offers, where experts discuss materials, techniques, and lighting, as well as offer tips for successful artistic floral design within specific dimensions. She also used an advisor provided through the meetings; in fact, she recommends this training and support to all Flower Show novices.

Undaunted, even spurred by her performance at the 2000 show, Shelby is returning to exhibit on a larger scale. This year, in collaboration with veteran exhibitor (and multiple winner) Susan Essick, their entry is a 10 x 12-foot room design. Enthusiastic about their interpretation of the theme "Black, White and Read All Over," Shelby says, "We're doing something that has to do with the Ice Age." That intriguing description has everything to do with an exhibitor inspired by the intellectual challenge and competitive spirit of artistic design competition.

Like Shelby, newcomer Charlie Heiser found the notion of exhibiting at the Philadelphia Flower Show a bit overwhelming. "I think people are intimidated as first timers," he says. "I sure was. I'm a prime example of someone who never entered before, yet I won six ribbons for my five pots of tulips...including two blues!"

Another photographer who works in commercial advertising, Charlie entered horticulture competition for the first time at the 2000 show. He forced 100 'Princess Irene' tulips, which he chose because his mother's name is Irene. Reflecting on his success last year, he says "It really shocked me—I never

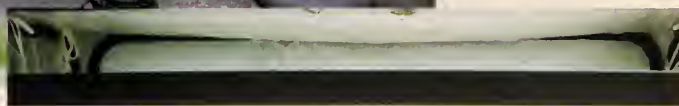


expected to do that well. I'm still flabbergasted about it."

Like Shelby, Charlie was bitten hard by the competitive bug and is exhibiting on a larger scale this year. He plans to triple the number of entries, noting, "Last year I planted seven pots, this year I planted 27." Charlie's goal is to achieve a complete sweep with a first, second, and third in each of three tulip classes he plans to enter.

Common threads connect these newcomers' experiences. They both found people at the Show—passers and exhibitors—to be helpful and generous in sharing their expertise. In addition, Shelby and Charlie characterized the plunge into Flower Show competition as both thrilling and rewarding, especially when thousands of visitors stopped to admire and enjoy their entries. Still amazed, Charlie offered this parting shot, "I actually took pictures of people *taking pictures* of my tulips." 📷

The author of *Gardening With Roses* and a contributor to *The American Horticultural Society A-Z Encyclopedia of Garden Plants*, Judy McKeon is a horticulturist who shares her experience and enthusiasm for gardening through lectures, articles, garden tours, and private consultations. Contact her at ripka@surfree.com.



Above Left: Charlie Heiser in his verdant Center City garden. **Below:** Charlie's prize-winning 'Princess Irene' tulips thriving under grow lights before the Show.

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Here Come the Judges

A View From the Other Side of the Blue Ribbons

"Each exhibitor probably
deserves a blue ribbon for
their effort."

—Show Judge Patter Peterson



They can stroke you with silk gloves or torment you with neglect. They can make you feel like royalty or make you want to call a crisis-intervention hotline. Who are they? They are the Philadelphia Flower Show judges, in whose grasp lies the power to reward the few and disappoint the many.

What is it that arouses all these intense feelings? At its core, it's as simple as the relationship between a doting parent and pampered child. For in every exhibitor's heart-of-hearts, their entry—whether it's a houseplant, dried-flower arrangement, or major exhibit—is their favorite child. If that child is rejected, then the parent reacts like a lioness protecting its young. So given the electric atmosphere at the Show, who would want the job of deciding between a first-place blue ribbon and a second-place red? And, how does one become a judge in the first place? Here's a look at the mysterious world of judging at the Philadelphia Flower Show and other local horticulture events.

WHO ARE THEY?

The truth is that all judges are not alike; in fact, there is a *de facto* hierarchy. I remember when I judged for the first time at a small flower show and was introduced to the pair with whom I'd be judging. Both had credentials as long as an ocean liner, while I was merely an experienced exhibitor and a complete judging novice. My less-than-reverential place in the pecking order was immediately established when I overheard one of my cohorts nod at me and say, "Oh, I'm judging with him today—he's *nothing*."

At the top of the judging hierarchy for competitions, such as the Philadelphia Flower Show's "competitive classes," are the Garden Club of America (GCA) judges and the National Council of State Garden Clubs (NCSGC) federated judges. They take courses, attend symposia, and go through a time-consuming process to become judges. There are also specific training programs for many of the most popular garden and indoor



Richard Ezell discussing the merits of an entry in the Flower Show's Bulb Classes. Spectators and entrants look on intently.

plants, like daffodils, chrysanthemums, and African violets. In every judging school, the intent is to teach the student to make decisions as objectively as possible. For artistic entries, points are awarded for how the exhibit displays the principles and elements of design (e.g., rhythm, proportion, balance, scale, dominance, form, color and contrast).

In contrast, horticultural judges have a "green sheet" that tells them how much to count for elements like cultural perfection, difficulty, rarity, bloom, stems, foliage, and the exhibit as a whole.

There are also those who have learned their craft, as judge Alan Slack admits, "by osmosis." These are either professional or amateur horticulturists who are very knowledgeable about specific groups of plants or the entire plant kingdom. They are recognized for the expertise they bring to a flower show, and are sought out by show organizers. John Story, who manages the grounds and greenhouses of Meadowbrook Farm, is one such expert. He and Slack are often on teams that decide which blue-ribbon entry should get a rosette (a kind of "best-of-the-blues" ribbon).

The best judges remain committed to continuing education, even if they've been judging for 20 years and have college degrees in art. Sally Humphries, who is a member of the World Association of Flower Show Arrangers and a judge in the Flower Show's "artis-

tic" classes, espouses the importance of ongoing training. She often travels out of the Philadelphia region—and even the country—to attend classes and thinks judges should have a "world view." Dr. Kathryn Andersen, a renowned expert on daffodils, also attends classes and goes to Europe and North Africa almost every year to see daffodils blooming in the wild.

Regardless of their background, "Judges should come as well prepared as possible, and be honest, fair, and free from personal preference," says artistic class judge Kit Barker. "The main thrust is to be encouraging, so the exhibitor will come back next year."

THE FINAL SCORE

At the Philadelphia Flower Show, encouraging new exhibitors is a bit easier in the artistic classes, since each artistic entry receives printed comments from the judges. The sheer mass of entries in the horticulture classes makes such feedback impossible. [Note: see sidebar on page 39 for an explanation of the different competitive classes.] Richard Ezell, a judge in the Bulb Classes, wishes he could write encouraging comments for every exhibitor. Instead, his judging team will sometimes comment on the quality of an entire class.

In total, there are approximately 250 judges working at the Philadelphia



Judges at work at Longwood Gardens' daffodil show.

Flower Show. Judges work in groups of three and, in the artistic categories, Show organizers try to make sure that each panel is represented by both a GCA and a NCSGC judge. They also only use judges from outside the Philadelphia area, so a particular exhibitor's style isn't recognized.

With judging, as with any human endeavor, there can be differences of opinion. In the artistic categories, the judges can separately assign points to each exhibit and come to a consensus. In the Horticult, however, they rarely use a point system for every entry in a class; there may be more "give-and-take." But I've never heard of serious contention. The judges know who is more knowledgeable about which plants, and, if there's a tough decision to make, final judgment is often deferred to the acknowledged expert on the team.


THE REWARDS

After talking to various horticultural and artistic judges for this article, I learned something important. Having been an exhibitor at the Philadelphia Flower Show since 1979, I had assumed that people become judges because it is an empowering experience. But I found out how wrong I was. Every one of the judges with whom I spoke said that the most exciting thing is that each Show gives them the chance to learn something new about people's creativity or about the plant kingdom.

All 250 judges consider it an honor to be invited to the Philadelphia Flower Show. As Jane Godshalk (2001 vice-chair of artistic judges) puts it, "People are clamoring to be a judge at the Show. One year the Show was short one judge, so I called a woman from Houston at the last minute. She was thrilled and took an expensive, mid-week flight to

Philadelphia to fill the judging panel." While all judges get a free lunch at the Flower Show, other than that, they don't receive a penny, regardless of how far they have traveled to practice their craft. It's all done for the love of the event.

Since most judges have been exhibitors themselves, they understand the skill, patience, and love that go into every entry. Patter Peterson expressed it best when she admitted being "scared to death before each blue ribbon is awarded. Each exhibitor probably deserves a blue for their effort," she said. To her, the Philadelphia Flower Show is all about "compassion and humanity."

With judges like that, every exhibitor should feel appreciated, whether an 8-inch blue, silk ribbon is placed next to their entry or not. At the Philadelphia Flower Show, we're all part of something magical, and that's enough. 

A Beginner's Guide to the Philadelphia Flower Show

Many small parts add up to create the larger Flower Show. Here is a breakdown to help you find your way around:

Major Exhibitors: The section of large exhibits on the far right side of the Show floor. Here is where you can see the grandeur and majesty of the Philadelphia Flower Show, as well as some breathtaking examples of garden design. Also included in this category are the somewhat smaller exhibits produced by colleges, schools, and other not-for-profit exhibitors.

Artistic Classes: Part of the Show's extensive competition section, these design categories include the following fanciful sections: Rooms, Miniatures, Tables, Niches, Defined Spaces, Open Spaces, and more. This area captures the artful side of the competitions, requiring its entrants to be as adept at design as they are at gardening.

Horticulture Classes: Another area of red-hot competition, these classes are where the expert growers get to show off their perfect plants. Everything from bulbs to orchids to container displays (and much more!) can be found here, all in stunning condition.

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BY BEVERLY FITTS

Cold Weather Combinations

Everybody should have a winter garden. It's amazing what colorful twigs and delicate blossoms can do for failing spirits in the dead of winter. Just looking at flowering plants on a snowy day brings a smile to my face, especially from the window of a cozy room. Add a few birds fluttering around the feeder, a cup of tea with warm buttered toast, and a John Sherwood garden mystery, and that cold, dreary day becomes snugly perfection.

One good plant combination to view from indoors uses the scarlet branches of a red osier dogwood shrub (*Cornus stolonifera* 'Isanti') against the shiny, dark green leaves and red berries of a holly tree (*Ilex* 'Nellie R. Stevens'). Underplant the dogwood with masses of white Christmas roses (*Helleborus niger*), perch a cardinal in the holly, and you'll have a picture worthy of a holiday greeting card.

However, after two or three days of snugly perfection, I'm climbing the walls and need to get outdoors. By the back door I planted a Lenten rose (*H. orientalis* 'Old Early Purple') to beat the winter doldrums. Now, every time I leave the house or climb the icy steps to the kitchen door in early March, I look right into its cheery face. This plant's determination to bloom in the face of frosty winter winds never fails to lift my spirits.

Years ago, that single purple Lenten rose inspired my first winter combination: two Christmas ferns (*Polystichum acrostichoides*), three lavender Lenten roses, several European gingers (*Asarum*

europaeum), and a hundred or more snowdrops (*Galanthus nivalis*). At least once each winter, this mix prompts me to get out my camera, lie flat on my stomach (sometimes in the snow), and try yet again to get a decent picture of



Beverly Fitts/shot at David Culp's garden in Downingtown, PA

the downward-facing flowers. From the warmth of the living room window, my husband shakes his head in disbelief and calls, "Why don't you cut them and photograph indoors?" A clever idea, but hardly any fun.

Pleased with that first combination, I repeated it under the pear trees that border our street. This time I added the silver foliage of *Lamium maculatum* 'Beacon Silver' for contrast, and the purple foliage of *Ajuga reptans*

'Atropurpurea' to echo the pink and lavender flowers of the Lenten roses. Together, they weave through the drifts of hellebores, ferns, gingers and snowdrops, creating a tapestry effect spread like a counterpane over the beds beneath our curbside trees. Neighborhood walkers often stop to enjoy the colorful array. One late February day, I even saw a woman with a pad and pencil taking notes.

If you want winter combinations that neighbors stop to admire, plant your favorite hellebore. Combine it with other evergreen perennials that have bold, lacy or linear leaves, such as *Corydalis cheilanthesifolia* or *Carex plantaginea*. Tuck in some variegated or colored foliage, and add some early bulbs. Soon people will be lingering on your curbside, too.

This spring I plan to expand the bed under our pear trees and include the pink flowers of a 'Dawn' viburnum (*Viburnum x bodnantense* 'Dawn'). The rich display of flowers on the shrub, perennials, and bulbs will mimic spring in the midst of winter, while the contrasting form, texture and color of their leaves will provide interest all year.

Then, one snowy day late next winter, I'll get a cup of tea and toast, nestle into my favorite chair by the living room window, and open my newest mystery. Between chapters, or maybe even paragraphs, I'll look up to admire the lavender, pink and white flowers of a combination that's bound to beat the winter doldrums. ☐

Beverly Fitts is a busy garden lecturer, photographer, and former president of the Hardy Plant Society/Mid-Atlantic Group.

UNCOMMON GROUNDCOVERS



BY PATRICIA A. TAYLOR

Tiarella Hybrids

One winter's day about four years ago, I found a 2-foot patch of purple foliage tucked into a garden by the northeast corner of my house. At first, I was amazed and wondered how it had gotten there. And then I was worried. Why couldn't I recall planting a groundcover in the area? Was I having a "senior moment?"

Since it was quite cold that February day (I do remember that!), I put on my boots, grabbed a coat, and went out to investigate. Much to my amazement, I discovered that the elegant foliage cover was a form of *Tiarella*. Since I had planted what I thought were clump-forming plants, I was surprised to see the plant spreading. Furthermore, until that moment, I had not realized tiarellas were evergreen in my Zone 6b garden in Princeton, New Jersey. But, yes, they were.

I scurried inside to read about the genus and to check my purchase records. My neighbor had long grown the spreading form commonly known as foamflower and classified as *T. cordifolia*. In spring, it has fluffy, white flower spikes on stems 12- to 16-inches tall and rambles happily through eastern woodlands. My property was too small for such an expansive plant. Instead, I had bought *T. wherryi*, a form discovered by and named for noted Pennsylvania plantsman Edgar T. Wherry. This pretty perennial knows its place, forming tidy clumps and bearing profuse pink flowers in spring with chance of a second bloom in fall.

Other *Tiarella* purchases of mine included cultivars such as 'Oakleaf', 'Tiger Stripe', and 'Elizabeth Oliver'. The

number of named tiarellas should have tipped me off to the genus' inherent promiscuity. This is a group of Zones 3-8 plants that not only show immense variation within a species but also readily swap genetic material with other family members. (They're the "ella" in *Heucherella*, a hybrid of tiarellas with heucheras.) Thus, while most tiarellas are described as having heart-shaped leaves, 'Oakleaf' lives up



photo courtesy of Primrose Path

to its name. This chance seedling was introduced to the gardening world by Dunvegan Wholesale Nursery in eastern Pennsylvania.

The advent of 'Tiger Stripe' was carefully planned, created from crosses made by noted *Tiarella* breeders Charles and Martha Oliver of the Primrose Path nursery in Scottsdale, Pennsylvania (www.theprimrosepath.com). At the time, they thought they were using different species as parents (*T. cordifolia*, and *T. wherryi*). However, botanists have declared that the parents are siblings, not cousins, as all eastern forms are now classified as *T. cordifolia*. In any case, 'Tiger Stripe' has heart-shaped leaves on which central maroon strips appear as the season progresses. The leaves turn a dark red in

fall and often remain through winter, especially in sheltered locations such as mine. It holds a gold medal from the Dutch Royal Society for Horticulture.

The Olivers then introduced western North American species into the *Tiarella* playpen. 'Tiger Stripe' and the western *T. trifoliata* hit it off and produced a plant so beautiful that the Olivers named it in honor of their daughter. 'Elizabeth Oliver' is a restrained runner, rather than a galloper such as foamflower. And she is a beautiful one, with heavy maroon markings on deeply lobed leaves and lovely pink flowers.

There are now dozens of new *Tiarella* cultivars to charm gardeners. There are also some new ones in my gardens. It turns out that tiarellas hybridize all on their own and I now have a beautiful mixture of self-sown plants. They are delightful in spring when paired with white bloodroots, yellow celandine poppies, and blue Jacob's ladders; quietly elegant in summer with their marked foliage; enchanting when they sometimes repeat bloom in fall; and exquisite when tinged with purple in winter cold.

So let me make it perfectly clear, dear reader. I was not having a "senior moment" that February day. Rather I was looking at the beautiful results of a rather frisky group of plants. You may want to admire their self-sown ingenuity in your own gardens. 🌱

Many other lovely groundcovers are described in Taylor's book on *Easy Care Native Plants* (Holt).



TOOL TALES

BY ADAM LEVINE

Hand Tools

More than once, while watching a gardening friend struggle with a rusty, beat-up hand tool that looks like it was manufactured in the late Middle Ages, I've been tempted to scream, "There's a better way to do this job!" After 17 years as a gardener, I've seen enough to know the importance of using the right tool for the right task.


Hand tools are designed for small jobs or, in the case of digging or weeding, working in small spaces where bigger tools may cause damage to roots or stems. But gardeners often make the mistake of trying to use a hand tool for a task when a larger tool would do a better job. Many times I've used a trowel to hack out a planting hole for, say, a quart-size perennial, when it would have been much easier to stand up, grab a shovel or spade and dig the hole with one quick scoop. In *The Tool Book* (an excellent resource for information about garden tools of all sizes and shapes), author William Bryant Logan points out another common mistake. "It's comical to watch a gardener attempt to get through a big stem with a pair of hand pruners," he writes. "The hand twists this way, then that way, as though there were a tug of war going on between the gardener and the plant. The results of such a confrontation are detri-

mental to both plant and pruners." When this happens, it's time to give up and reach for the loppers instead.

What I often fail to take into account, however, is that mucking around in the dirt with hand tools—or even with our

just what my friend needs to feel close to spirit of the long-gone loved one who gave it to her. (I'm just thankful that my mother, who bought me my first pair of Felco hand pruners, knew a good tool from a mediocre one. Otherwise I might be using some second-rate tool that, even as it gave me sentimental thoughts of dear old Mom, would be mangling my shrubs.)

Like all gardening tools, hand tools come in an almost bewildering range of styles, sizes, shapes and prices. Every gardener has his or her particular favorite, but the key is to find a tool that feels right, not just to blindly follow a friend's recommendation. The grip should fit the hand comfortably, and the tool's weight should be appropriate to the strength of the user. In the wrong hand, an otherwise perfectly good tool might put too much pressure on the palm or wrist, causing soreness and blisters or, with extended use, numbness in the fingers.

While the most exquisitely engineered horticultural tools are a gardener's own hands, even the simplest hand tools allow us to accomplish much more than with bare hands alone. They are often a more efficient choice than clumsy, noisy power tools. Indeed, we couldn't garden without them. 



Pete Prown

bare hands—isn't always about efficiency. Often there's an emotional component at work that is just as important as getting the job done. That antique tool may not be the most effective at digging or weeding or cutting, but it might be

dress—perhaps the most difficult piece to design—and we managed to make the mannequin look pretty good in a dress made from steely Reynolds Wrap and soda-can lids. Finally, Susan whipped up one of her amazing flower arrangements on Saturday morning. We were elated, satisfied with our achievement, and just plain dog tired, like every other exhibitor in the Convention Center. What a great feeling it was.

Later that day, we learned that we had won a 3rd place ribbon—pretty good, we figured, for a bunch of first-timers. At the next round of judging a few days later, we garnered yet another yellow ribbon. Yet as tired as we were, it wasn't

long until we started talking about next year's Show. What would we do differently? What pitfalls would we avoid? And most importantly—who was going to bring the donuts? As I write this, I don't have any answers, other than the fact that, come February, you'll find me with my garden club, feverishly trying to assemble an exhibit for the 2001 Show's ever-competitive Tables class. I wouldn't miss it.

Pete Prown

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American Beauty

A Portrait of *Nelumbo lutea*

by Gayle B. Samuels

Like many people, I didn't know there was an American lotus—that is, until I attended a lecture on rare plants at PHS headquarters in Philadelphia. It was there that I was finally introduced to this exceptionally beautiful native. Like many gardeners, I had been looking at lotuses, yet thinking they were water lilies. But as it happens, the two are relatives. The lotus, water lily, magnolia, and tulip tree are part of a very ancient group, among the most primitive of the flowering plants.

The American lotus (*Nelumbo lutea*) is an aquatic plant that can be found in most of the continental United States east of the Mississippi River, including

Pennsylvania, and several states west of that divide. Its nearly circular leaves—positioned like a widely inverted umbrella—and pale yellow, fragrant flowers stand above the water, rising almost five feet from the surface. With careful timing, you can watch as these many-petaled blossoms unfold. They keep regular hours, these flowers do, opening each morning and closing at night.

But ours is not the only lotus, nor is it the best known. What we generally think of when the word “lotus” is mentioned is the other lotus species, *Nelumbo nucifera*—there are only two. This is the pink or white flower that is commonly depicted in ancient images, particularly those associated with creation myths of the Hindu god Brahma.

In the same lecture at PHS, Academy of Natural Sciences botanist Dr. Alfred E. Schuyler pointed out that the color of the two lotus species serves as their only distinguishing characteristic. In other words, if you came across an albino lotus, it could not be classified. Or if you saw a lotus that wasn't flowering, the same would be true. Simply put, there is no difference between the two species other than the color of their blossoms.

The lotus spreads easily in the wild because of its long-lived seeds, which are carried in a seed-pod that is often used in dried-flower arrangements. Its seeds are so durable, in fact, that a Japanese scientist who discovered 450-year-old lotus seeds from a peat deposit in southeastern Manchuria was able to germinate them successfully.

Still, the American lotus is endangered in many states, a victim of human intervention and invasive plants in our waterways and wetlands. However, this species has been around for a very long time; indeed, the seeds sprouted by the aforementioned Japanese scientist were older than the full extent of U.S. history. That the American lotus will endure seems certain. As to our botanical designations, they remain suspect—but fortunately, in a very useful way. □

Gayle Samuels lives and gardens in Villanova, PA. She is the author of *Enduring Roots: Encounters with Trees, History, and the American Landscape* (Rutgers Univ. Press).



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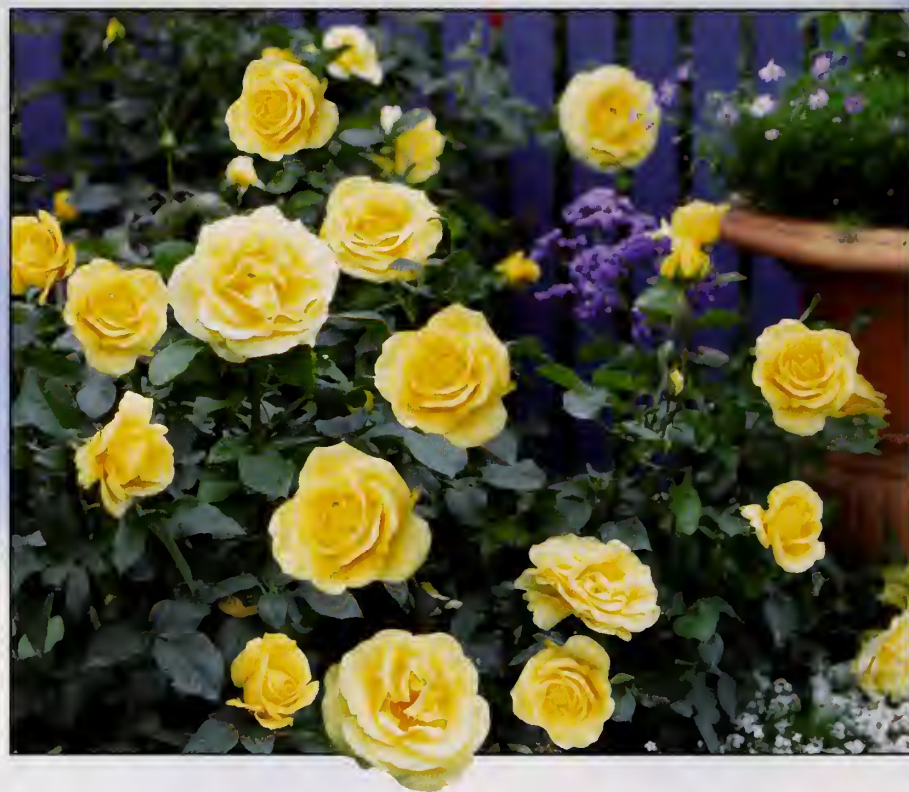
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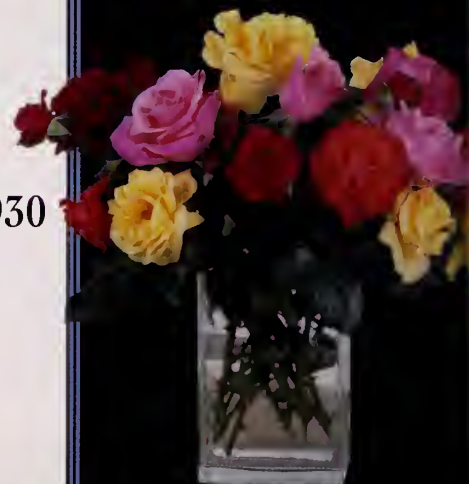


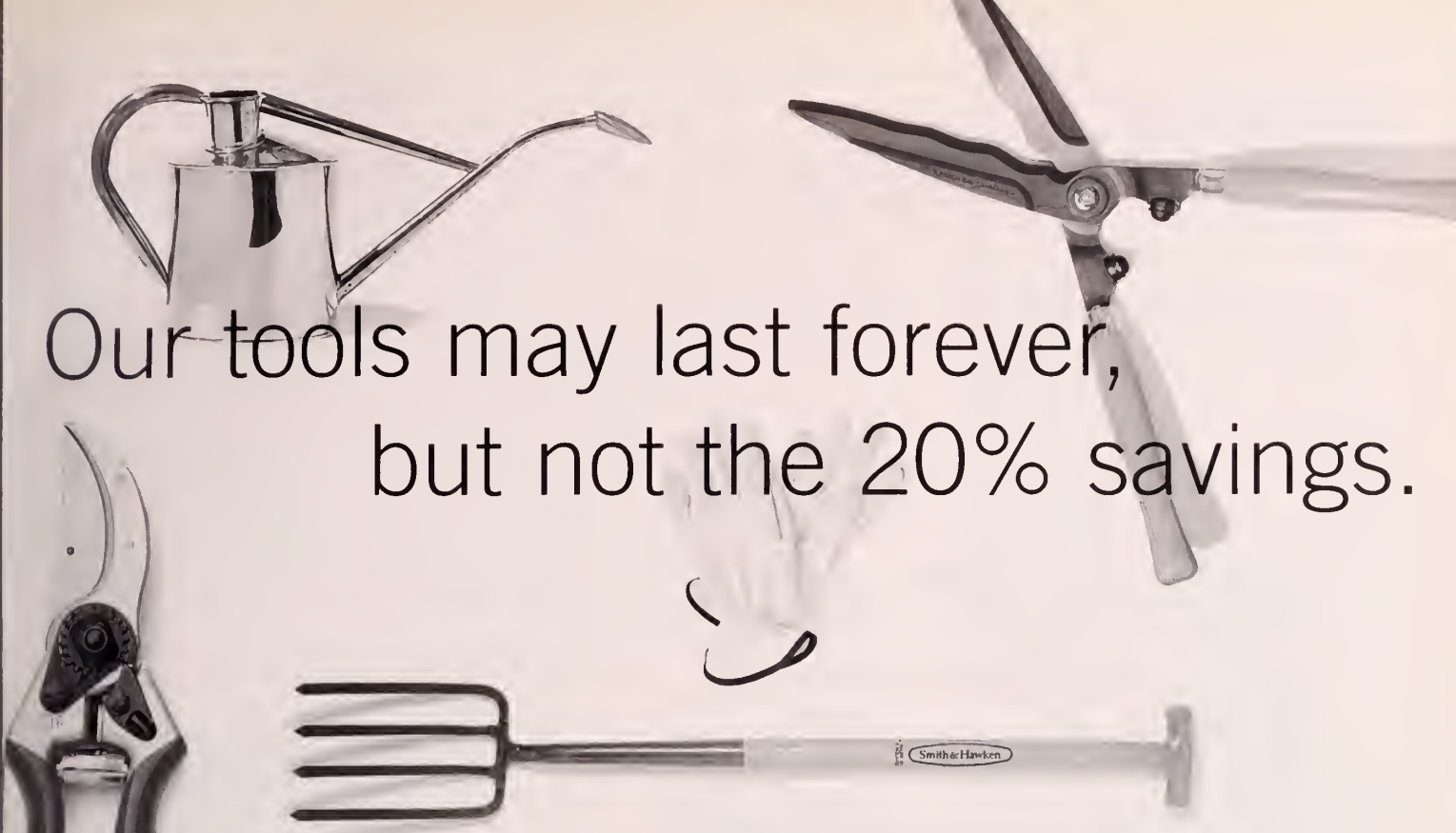
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Derek Fell takes us on a tour of his grand gardens at Cedaridge Farm and offers tips on how to take care of a large planting area. It may seem impossible, but with care and planning, taking care of a big garden may be easier than you think.

18 Celebrating City Gardens

Each year, Philadelphia gardeners spruce up their plots to compete in PHS's City Gardens Contest. From intimate private spaces to large community gardens, John Gannon shows us horticultural attractions that win honors for improving the quality of urban life and giving our city a wonderful "green" dimension. And don't miss the sidebar on PHS's new suburban contest!



24 The Gourmet Garden

While ornamental gardening often attracts more attention, the humble kitchen garden is horticulture at its most practical and charming. Here, Lorraine Kieffer shows us her abundant South Jersey garden, as well as gives us ideas on how to start a sumptuous kitchen garden of our own.

30 *Oxalis triangularis*

Looking for a great four-season container plant? Try *Oxalis triangularis*, the purple-leaf shamrock. This small wonder has both pretty flowers and interesting dark foliage—better still, it's fairly easy to grow. Follow Duane Campbell's basic instructions and you'll enjoy this *Oxalis* all year long.

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The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society motivates people to improve the quality of life and create a sense of community through horticulture.

Cover Photos by Pete Prown, John Gouker, and Steven Maciejewski

GREEN scene

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We may lump ourselves under the catch-all name of “gardeners” year-round, but come spring, we all turn into ferocious plant hunters. A plant hunter doesn’t casually browse the aisles of their local nursery to find a cute annual for the front border. *No*, plant hunters have spent the past few wintry months cooped up inside their houses, manically reading catalogs and fixating on the plants they’re going to use this year. And, above all, they all covet one particular

The Plant Hunter

plant, a specimen they saw last year in someone else’s garden and swore to themselves, “Next spring, I *must* have that one.”

For me, it’s black taro (*Alocasia* or *Colocasia* sp.). Cultivars like ‘Black Dragon’ or ‘Black Magic’ have truly seductive foliage, with large, dark-purple leaves that verge on a charcoal hue. [See photo on this page.] A tender tuber, black taro is an amazingly versatile plant. It can go in the ground, in a pot, or in the shallow end of your water garden, submerged in a con-

tainer. It also can be matched with just about any other color, too—its dark, rich foliage will create mysterious “black holes” in your garden. Fortunately, as well as local nurseries, I’ve found numerous sources on the Internet. I even hear black taro is sometimes auctioned off on eBay!

I’ve been asking other “plant hunters” what’s lined up in their sights this spring. Marilyn Romenesko, a landscape architect in our Philadelphia Green program, admitted that she’s looking for a *Pennisetum orientale* cultivar called ‘Karley Rose’. “I’m anxious to use this in some of our public gardens in the city because it starts blooming in June and continues through

September,” she says. “Its inflorescences are a dusty rose color, and the plant grows in height from 12 to 36 inches. It is also a perennial, and I think it will work well as a back drop for hot shades of pink and orange annuals.”

Down in Delaware, noted horticulturist Kathryn Andersen is looking for something yellow. “Last week I bought a small bunch of bright yellow alstroemerias (Peruvian lilies, *Alstroemeria* sp.) at the grocery store and thought how nice it would be to grow these in the garden,” she says.

“Alas, everyone knows that alstroemerias are tropical, requiring greenhouse conditions or very large windows. What a pleasant surprise it was to find one in Tony Avent’s newly arrived Plant Delights Nursery catalog (919-772-4794, www.plantdelights.com). There I found the yellow *Alstroemeria* ‘Sweet Laura’, which is hardy in Zones 5b-8. Hybridized at the University of Connecticut, it is not only definitely hardy in our region, but also has the extra bonus of fragrance. The plant does not burn out in the heat of summer and will spread by ever-

green stolons once established. I cannot wait to see the golden yellow blooms touched with cinnamon flecks and orange tips.”

In Philadelphia’s western suburbs, *Green Scene* contributor Marby Sparkman is on the hunt for a lovely wallflower, *Erysimum* ‘Bowles’ Mauve’. Says Marby, “Its lilac-blue spikes and grayish foliage are splendid in a spring garden. While ‘sprucing up’ our garden for a tour one year, my husband and I added one in perfect bloom, and it made the pinks and yellows around it sing. It only returned for two years, and then a very cold winter did it in. You don’t see this wallflower very often, but I have a snapshot of it in my mind from its brief life in my garden and am dying to find it again.”

Veritable fountains of information, the volunteers who staff our “Ask a Gardener” help desk (askagardener@pennhort.org) are always ready to help members with their gardening questions. To test the system, I sent an email and found super-volunteer Sandra Salkeld ready with a quick answer: “I’m looking for *Rosa glauca*, because it’s beautiful year round and particularly striking during its blooming season. The foliage is wonderful as a background to other plants, too.”

Finally, I turned to PHS chair Anne Kellett and asked what she’ll be hunting down in the coming weeks. Not surprisingly, she too had a ready answer: “While looking out a window at the snow this January, I found myself thinking about a perfect container full of ferns. In fact, one particular plant came to mind, Japanese climbing fern (*Lygodium japonicum*). A 2-foot trellis will support its long, delicate fronds, as well as provide height and interest to my garden. I know I can get it from Fancy Fronds Nursery in Washington State (360-793-1472, www.fancyfronds.com). Fortunately, it comes in sets of three—one seems hardly enough!”

Now that you’ve heard from some of our plant hunters, it’s your turn. What are you waiting for? Let the hunt begin....

Pete Prown
greenscene@pennhort.org



Catch a Shooting Star

Like many gardeners, I have a real penchant for native plants. They are quite lovely and often do well in my less-than-ideal clay soil. A few years back, while visiting the 45-acre displays at Garden in the Woods in Framingham, Massachusetts (508-877-6574 or www.newfs.org), I discovered *Dodecatheon meadia*, commonly called shooting star. The genus, *Dodecatheon*, is said to be named for the 12 Olympian gods. *Dodeka* is Greek for 12, and *theos* means god, so clearly, this plant has a lot of clout behind its name.

Shooting star belongs to the primrose family, and several species are found in North America. *D. meadia* was reportedly named after Richard Mead, an 18th-century English doctor who financed plant-hunting expeditions. Hardy in Zones 4-8,

it is native to moist meadows in the eastern U.S.

Emerging in April, the plant quickly produces a rosette of light green, tapered leaves. Flowering stems soon rise above the foliage, each terminating in a circle of nodding flowers somewhat reminiscent of cyclamen blooms. Each blossom is shaped like a badminton birdie, with back-swept petals of pink, magenta or white and a sharply-pointed, yellow and black clump of stamens surrounding a single pistil. The overall effect is quite dramatic, like a miniature fireworks display with showy flowers streaming downward on arching stems.

Shooting star prefers part shade and moist, well-drained soil. A spring ephemeral, it quickly goes dormant, rapidly disappearing following bloom only to re-emerge next spring. I plant it near leafy companions like ferns, or I sometimes add a small potted plant to fill in the empty spot without disturbing the dormant roots. It also makes an elegant addition to the rock garden. In fact, a shooting star is the symbol of the North American Rock Garden Society.

One of my most maintenance-free plants, shooting star rarely falls prey to pests or disease. Its only real threat is excessive collecting in the wild—native populations are now threatened or endangered in many states. We can all include this stunning flower in our gardens, but help to conserve our native flora by only purchasing nursery-propagated plants.

—Debbie Moran

Flora Graphics



SOURCES:

Shooting Star Nursery

444 Bates Road
Frankfort, KY 40601
(502) 223-1679
(Free catalog)

We-Du Nurseries

2055 Polly Spout Road
Marion, NC 28752
(828) 738-8300
(Catalog \$3) www.we-du.com

10 Tips for Better Garden Photos

Want to improve your garden photography? Follow these 10 simple tips and watch your pictures get better...in a snap.

- 1 **SHOOT ON EVENLY OVERCAST DAYS**, as well as at dawn or dusk. Bright, even cloud cover makes flowers glow and dark shadows disappear. If you're going to shoot on a sunny day, work at dawn or dusk to get dramatic, evocative lighting. Midday sun, however, can create harsh shadows and wash out color.
- 2 **USE A TRIPOD!** Since garden photography often requires good "depth of field" (allowing both near and distant objects to be in focus), a steady tripod is the way to go for taking long exposures or close-up "macro" shots.
- 3 **DON'T ALWAYS CENTER YOUR SUBJECT** in the viewfinder. Moving the subject off to one side of a photo, either vertically or horizontally, can make for a more dynamic image.
- 4 **MOVE UP CLOSE** and fill your viewfinder. Whether you're shooting people in a garden or a single flower, your subject(s) should take up a good portion of the image. All too frequently, photographers stand too far from the subject, making it look puny in the final print or slide.
- 5 If you have a "SLR" 35mm camera—as opposed to a basic point-and-shoot model—make sure all your lenses have either a **SKYLIGHT** or **UV FILTER** screwed on at all times. These inexpensive filters (\$10-\$40) remove various ranges of ultraviolet rays that can reduce color and contrast. If you buy no other filters, at least make sure you have a Skylight or UV.
- 6 For shooting on sunny days, use a **POLARIZING FILTER** on your SLR lens. Polarizers can provide super-rich colors, especially blue skies and dark water surfaces. Better still, they don't cost very much—usually under \$40.
- 7 If you shoot slides, try **FUJI VELVIA** or **PROVIA 100F**, or **KODAK ELITE "EXTRA COLOR"** film. These days, many professional garden photographers use these slow films (ASA 100 or lower), since they can amplify the color and detail of flowers, creating spectacular images. These are by no means the only films to try, but they are what many pros use. Then again, if you're shooting at the Philadelphia Flower Show, use print film instead. The theatrical lighting used in many exhibits can throw off slide film, while print film will give you a greater margin of error in capturing just the right exposure.



WEEDS FLAMBÉ. Have you been ambushed by marauding armies of weeds? Do your revenge fantasies include high-powered weapons? If so, M.K. Rittenhouse & Sons Ltd. of Canada has the arsenal for you. Popular in Europe for several years, the **Infra-Weeder** uses propane to create a stream of 1800°F infrared heat, killing unwanted vegetation by destroying cells in the root system. Since there is no open flame and heat is directed downward, it can take out tough weeds while leaving desirable plants in place. With names like "Eliminator" and "Dandy Destroyer" (and hefty prices to match—\$248 to \$298), the Infra-Weeder will make you feel like a comic-book hero battling against the evil forces of weeds...and winning! For more information, call (877) 488-1914 or visit their website at www.rittenhouseonline.com.



WHY DO WE GARDEN? According to *American Demographics* magazine, the three top reasons people take up gardening are to spend time outdoors (44%), to be around beautiful things (42%), and to "relax and escape the pressures of everyday life" (39%). Other motivations include getting physical exercise, growing food and flowers for the home, and spending time with family members.

(continued next page)

continued on page 8

THE POTTING SHED

(Photo Tips continued)

8 BRACKET YOUR SHOTS. All pros “bracket” their work. What is bracketing? Simply put, use your camera’s meter to determine the correct exposure of the subject, then take another shot set to an f-stop above it and one more below (or whatever increment you choose). This way, you’re taking three shots of each subject, but since camera exposure meters are not always accurate, it’s more likely that one of the three exposure readings will be correct. Think of it as a little photographic insurance.

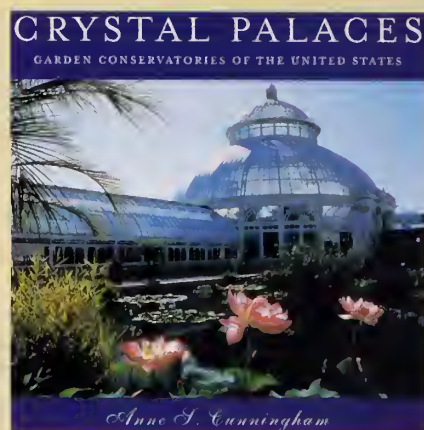
9 TRY A MACRO LENS. For those super close-ups of flowers, a macro lens allows you to focus within inches of the subject. You can either buy a separate macro lens or use a zoom lens with a built-in macro range. Again, prepare to use your tripod. Avoid shooting on windy days, too.



10 GET A REFLECTOR. Whether you buy a hand-held reflector or make one out of a 12 x 12-inch piece of cardboard covered with aluminum foil, a reflector can bounce light into the inner recesses of flowers for great effects and highlights. With your camera on a tripod, simply shoot your subject with its back or side to the sun and then put the reflector on the other side of the subject. Then “bounce” the sunlight off the reflector onto the subject. Once you do it, you’ll see how exciting reflectors can be. (In a pinch, you can even use a flashlight to add extra light!)

BONUS TIP! DON’T WORRY ABOUT “GOING DIGITAL.” While digital cameras may someday replace film-bearing cameras, currently only the very best digital units (\$2,000+) match the quality of conventional film. If you must have a digital camera, buy an inexpensive one and use it for family snapshots or loading your garden images onto the web. For the moment, old-fashioned film is still king for fine garden photography.

—Pete Prown



A CELEBRATION OF AMERICAN CONSERVATORIES. If the conservatory is your favorite part of botanical gardens, then you’ll love Anne Cunningham’s latest book, **Crystal Palaces: Garden Conservatories of the United States** (Chronicle Books, \$45.00). Illustrated with stunning color photographs, the book offers a visual tour of 25 exceptional greenhouses, from the Victorian-era Conservatory of Flowers in San Francisco’s Gold Gate Park to the recently completed Quad City Conservatory in Rock Island, Illinois. Indeed, it’s a beautiful guidebook. Before she moved to California a few years ago, Anne was a member of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society Council, a volunteer for many of our programs, and a frequent contributor to *Green Scene*.

HELP FOR TEACHERS & PARENTS. If you garden with youngsters or would like to, you owe yourself a visit to the National Gardening Association’s website, www.kidsgardening.com. The site offers a resource room for teachers, including gardening-based lesson plans, book recommendations, monthly gardening activities, and information on grants and other resources. You can subscribe to an online newsletter and visit a chat room for teachers. You can also register your school garden with NGA’s “Garden in Every School” program. The site offers a parent’s resource room, too, with equally helpful information on ways to get your kids involved in the home garden. The “Parent’s Primer” is especially useful, with information on age-appropriate gardening tasks, garden design, safety tips, and more.



ASK A GARDENER

by Garden Q & A Volunteers

I need a bamboo that grows fast and can tolerate the weather in Philly. I want this as a privacy screen that will be long lasting and contribute to what I hope will someday be a full Asian garden. Any recommendations?

Beth A. Mager, Philadelphia

There are several bamboos that are hardy in the Philadelphia area: *Phyllostachys aurea* (fishpole bamboo or golden bamboo) is a clump former, as is *Phyllostachys flexuosa* (zigzag bamboo). There is another group of bamboos which includes *Bambusa vulgaris*, but these are more invasive. Take care when selecting your bamboo that it is a true "clump former." If it spreads, put in a very deep container to keep it in place. In order to plan a truly oriental garden, you are welcome to research the characteristics of oriental gardening at our PHS McLean Library at 20th & Arch Streets. It is not so much the plants that are used, but their arrangement and pruning.

My peonies and roses are starting to show signs of life. When do I fertilize them?

Brad Wescott Thompson, Philadelphia

Peonies like a high phosphorus fertilizer in the spring. Roses are typically heavy feeders and like a well-balanced rose food. Feed early in spring and hoe the fertilizer in, but take care not to get it too close to the stems or surface roots. Fertilize again one month after the first flush of bloom has faded. Do not feed late because it causes soft growth.

My Japanese pine bonsai is dropping its needles. They are very dry to touch, even though I water the plant every day. I have also started to fertilize it every week. I have been putting it out in the sun everyday that the outside temperature goes above 60°F and it's being exposed to full sunlight. Any idea what is causing the needles to be so dry and brittle?

Nancy, via the Internet

A Japanese white pine bonsai should be kept outside during the winter in a cold frame or other area where the temperature is above freezing. It is definitely *not* a houseplant. Indeed, many bonsai plants should really be kept outside, unless it's a tropical specimen (like a ficus or bougainvillea).

In late fall, many pines drop old needles. As for your pine, first make sure it is still alive. Are the needles still dark green and flexible? If they are turning greyish and break readily, that is not a good sign. Try to bend the tip of a branch, if it is still flexible, the bonsai is probably still alive. If it snaps off and the wood is not greenish, the plant may be dead.

MORE KID POWER. If you teach in the Delaware Valley and are looking for great field trips, here's another valuable resource. The Gardens Collaborative, based in Philadelphia, has just published *The School Guide*, a directory of public gardens and historic houses in the greater Philadelphia-Wilmington area. The colorful booklet describes 25 sites in Delaware, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey, and includes helpful information on special programs for teachers and students. The Collaborative also offers *The Children's Fun Guide*, with more general information for parents. Both are free. To request a copy, write: The Gardens Collaborative, 9414 Meadowbrook Ave., Philadelphia PA 19118, or send an email to gardens@libertynet.org.

A NEW HUE. Tired of the same old tubers? The 2001 catalog from Johnny's Selected Seeds of Albion, Maine introduces new varieties of red, white and, yes, blue potatoes. Johnny's new 'All Blue' is a mid to late-maturing potato with solid deep blue skin and purple flesh. For a patriotic potato salad, combine it with Johnny's 'All Red', a smooth, bright-red-skinned potato with pink flesh, and 'Superior', an all-purpose white spud that withstands long storage and makes for excellent eating, according to Johnny's testers.

For a catalog, call (207) 437-9294 or visit Johnny's on the web at www.johnnysseeds.com.

—Jane Carroll



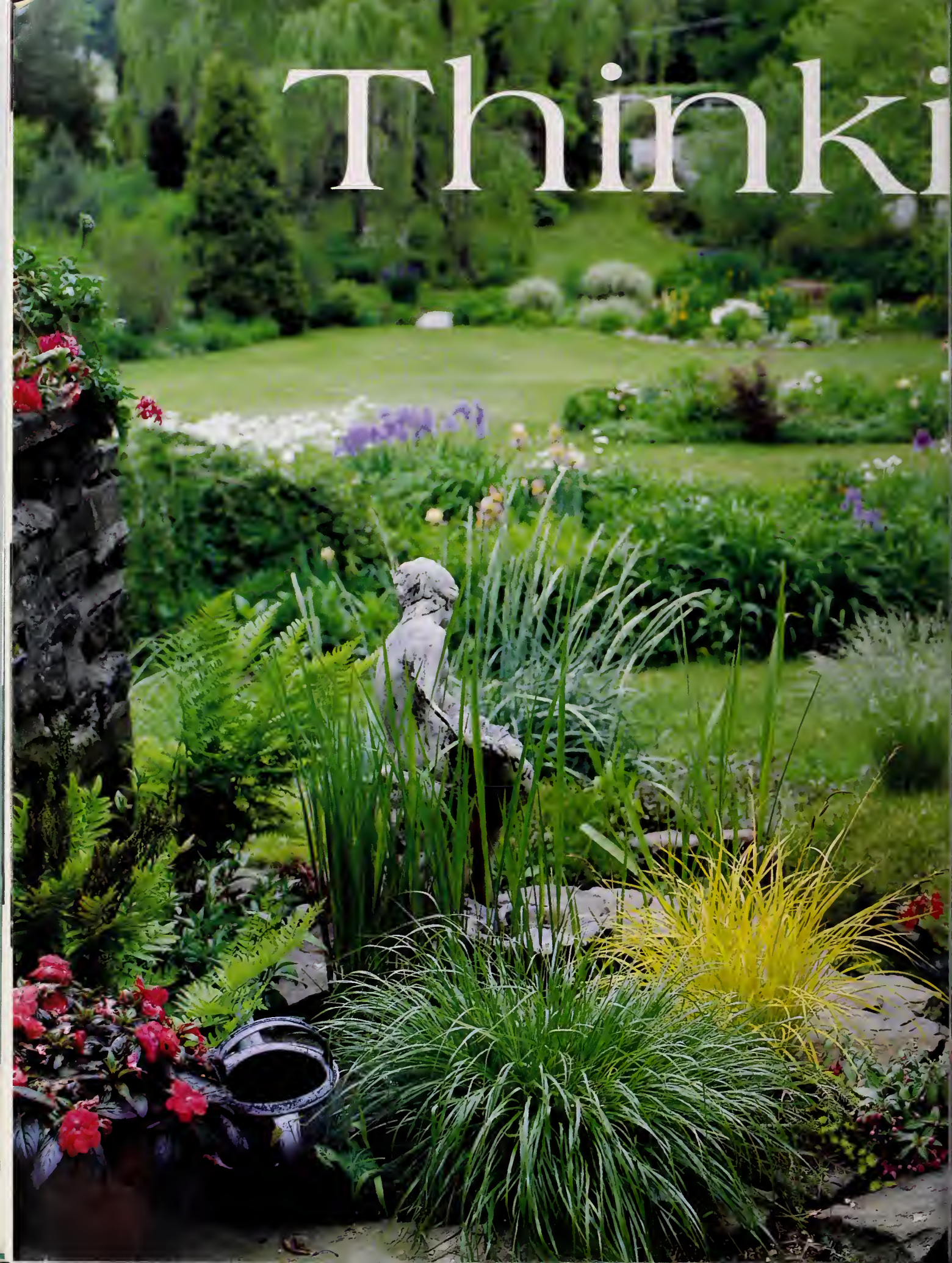
Pete Prown



Courtesy of Johnny's Selected Seeds

Do you have a question for our horticultural experts? If so, contact PHS's Garden Q & A phone line in the McLean Library, which is open Monday-Friday, 9:30-noon. Phone (215) 988-8777; fax (215) 988-8783; email: askagardener@pennhort.org

Thinki





ing Big

Caring for a Very Large Garden with only Two Pairs of Hands

Story and Photography by Derek Fell

My home and garden, Cedaridge Farm, consists of 24 gently sloping acres in Pennsylvania's scenic Tinicum Township, Bucks County. The gardens comprise about 5 acres, including 22 theme areas. I use it not only as an outdoor studio to shoot photographs for garden books and calendars, but also as a place to test new plant varieties and growing techniques, such as fertilizing formulas, irrigation systems, and deer control. All of this finds its way into my garden writing.

Aside from the spring cleanup and lawn mowing, only two people—my wife Carolyn and I—maintain this extensive garden throughout the season (we had extra help in the early days to clear wilderness areas, establish lawn vistas, and open up beds). That's not to say every part of the garden is always picture perfect. Different areas have their own peak periods of bloom, so we weed and feed them at staggered intervals, but the beautiful natural setting of woodland, stream and sunny slopes more than makes up for the temporary neglect of any particular area.

Needless to say, it takes a lot of effort to maintain such a large garden. We are both up at the crack of dawn, at work outside until 8 am, when we take a break for breakfast. I then go to my office until late afternoon when I rejoin Carolyn in the garden until dark. But we don't consider it work. For us, it is an uplifting spiritual experience and good exercise, providing more satisfaction for our expenditure of energy than time spent in a gym.

Carolyn and I spend lots of time on bed preparation. We double-dig every new bed, placing the indigenous soil on a tarp, extracting stones and weed



A spring vista with *Fritillaria imperialis*, *Narcissus*, and purple violas.

roots in the process. Because our soil is heavy clay, we always need to mix in plenty of humus (usually garden compost but sometimes bales of peat from the garden center); we also add sand and a slow-release granular fertilizer. This improved growing medium is then put back, raising the soil surface to improve drainage.

All the beds are mulched heavily with shredded pine bark to deter weeds, and we are fastidious about feeding the plants, applying a foliar feed (such as Spray 'n' Gro and Nitron 35) from a back-pack sprayer. Though we have deer in the garden almost every night, they do little damage because we spray everything they might eat with Liquid Fence, a deer repellent. An application in spring when leaves are breaking dormancy and booster applications at monthly intervals control the deer and other foraging animals like woodchucks and rabbits. Since we cannot use it on edible plants, they are grown in a separate area enclosed by a high deer fence.

We water new plantings for several weeks to get them established, but after that they're on their own. So when an important plant category does well, we plant more of it. We used to

have a fine stand of white birch, but they all died from heat stress and disease. I found a satisfactory substitute in a special selection of our native river birch (*Betula nigra* 'Heritage', a PHS Gold Medal Award plant), and we planted more than 30 one-year-old rooted cuttings in several groves, and they have grown five feet a year. The peeling, honey-colored bark remains attractive all year.

The floral plantings are mostly hardy perennials and flowering shrubs. We use annuals as "fillers" among the perennials and for containers. We also grow hardy, self-seeding annuals like Shirley poppies and gloriosa daisies, which come back each year. Our first big splash of color in spring comes from Lenten hellebores (*Helleborus orientalis*) in white, pink, and maroon. We started with 50 seedlings from Piccadilly Plant Farms in Georgia, and these have naturalized by the hundred under groves of maples. They flower continuously in March, April and May. These are followed by sweeps of daffodils and Spanish bluebells, which are planted at the edges of lawn and along paths through woodland.

We also have a large collection of 'Barnhaven' primroses



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The gardening couple standing behind the reliable spring bloomer, *Iris ensata*.

(*Primula polyanthus*), developed in Oregon over 40 years by the late Florence Bellis. Today, the pure strain of 'Barnhaven' is available only from a French nursery in Brittany, which I had the opportunity to visit. I order new seed every year to keep the collection strong. The 'Barnhaven' cultivars come in every color imaginable, including green and brown, and we have planted them thickly along woodland paths in moist, humus-rich soil and in a boggy section beside our stream. These rugged plants survive cold winters and summer drought.

We don't have a good azalea garden, but we have discovered that the Asian species azalea *Rhododendron poukhanense* (laven-der-pink) is sufficiently hardy and vigorous to give us a substantial display in early May. Moreover, its bloom-time overlaps that of redbuds (*Cercis canadensis*), crabapples, and pink dogwoods, so the four together provide an astonishing profusion of blossoms.

Peonies, oriental poppies and bearded irises continue the show through June, followed by drifts of garden lilies. Our lily favorites are the Asiatic hybrids, but we also have large plantings of Orientals (particularly 'Stargazer' and 'Casablanca') and Aurelians (such as 'Golden Splendor'), which bloom into July. We have had difficulty establishing roses (too cold for many hybrid teas and too many losses from

A lush planting of chrysanthemums, lamb's ears, and the shrub roses, 'Red Meidiland' and 'The Fairy'.



Thinking Big



Top: The potting shed at Cedaridge Farm, gaily festooned with easy-to-grow roses, clematis, and violas. **Left:** Want easy? Look at the Fell's border of low-maintenance Asiatic lilies.



A stunning display of the hardy primrose, *Primula polyanthus* 'Barnhaven'.

If you want to see Cedaridge Farm up close, make sure to join PHS' **Spring Garden Visits** in May and June (the farm will be featured on the May 20th tour). These informal garden tours are scheduled for Sunday, May 6 (Newtown Square, West Chester, Glen Mills and East Fallowfield); Sunday, May 20 (Doylestown, Gardenville, Point Pleasant, Pipersville and Holicong); and Sunday, June 10 (the Fairmount, Spring Garden and Logan Square neighborhoods of Philadelphia).

Watch for details and registration information in the April issue of *PHS News*, or call activities manager Chela Kleiber at (215) 988-8775.

rodents eating the roots), but we have found the Meidiland strain sufficiently vigorous to maintain good flowering, especially 'Meidiland Red' and 'Bonica' (pink). 'Flower Carpet' (a deep rosy-pink) is also dependable.

By mid-summer, the daylilies and dahlias come on strong until chrysanthemums and ornamental grasses pick up the slack in autumn to finish off the flowering season. Not all chrysanthemums sold in garden centers are hardy, but 'My Favorite' (a single pink with yellow eye and flowers as large as a shasta daisy) performs well, and we have planted it in all the sunny perennial beds; it mixes nicely with fountain grass. For shade, we adore hostas. I especially like breeder Paul Aden's hybrids, such as 'Blue Angel' and 'Sum & Substance', because the huge, heart-shaped leaves make a big impact wherever they grow.

We also enjoy container gardening and are lucky enough to have a broad flight of stone steps leading from the kitchen door into the garden, where we display an assortment of plants in terracotta pots. A flagstone patio off the guest cottage also features Versailles planter boxes with imaginative plant combinations.

In the vegetable garden, we make quilt patterns with blocks of plants in contrasting colors, such as 'Australian Yellow', 'Red Sails' and 'Green Ice' lettuce. (But the vegetable garden is a story in itself, which I hope to tell on another occasion.)

Maintaining such a large and ambitious garden requires teamwork and planning. I prepare the cultivated

spaces and Carolyn plants them, and we collaborate on design concepts like color harmonies. Each of us takes charge of weeding certain areas: Carolyn's domain includes the sunny perennial borders, cutting and cottage gardens; mine, the vegetable garden, stream and shade gardens. ("His and her" wheelbarrows make frequent trips to the compost piles). Of course, we use low-maintenance plants wherever possible.

So if you have a lot of space, it doesn't necessarily mean you have to hire an army of landscapers. If you are willing to put in the time and effort, it really is possible to maintain a large garden without much outside help—and the rewards will be all your own. At Cedaridge Farm, we hope the results speak for themselves. 🌱

Derek Fell's latest book is *Van Gogh's Gardens* (Simon & Schuster).

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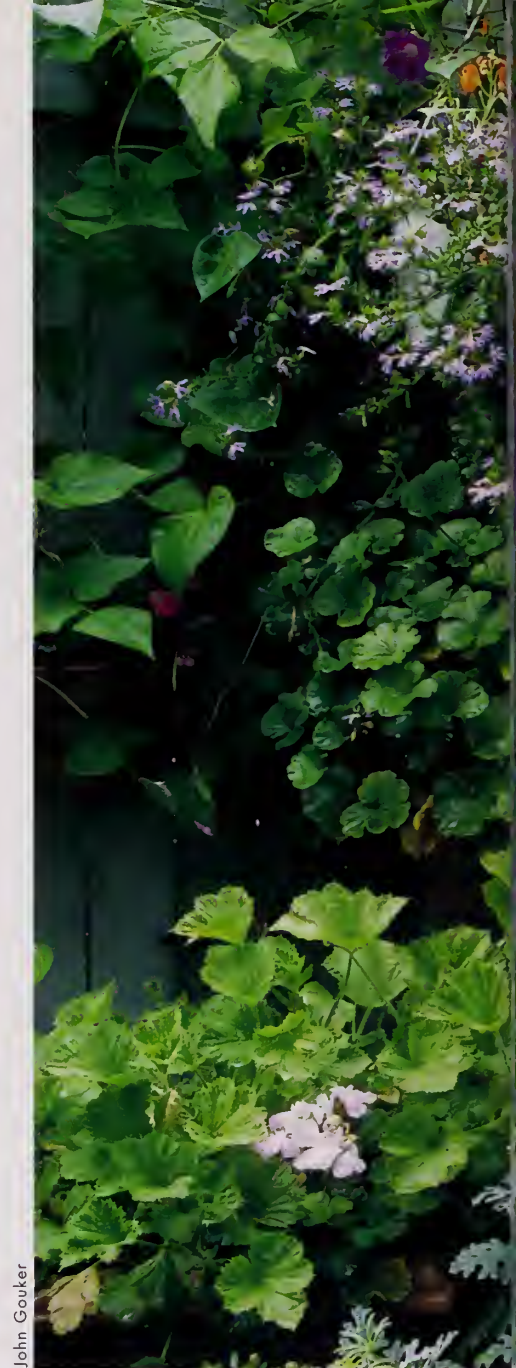
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Philadelphia's *Secret Gardens*

Inside the
Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's
City Gardens Contest

Story by John Gannon

*A*fter recently moving back to the Art Museum neighborhood, I found myself on the bus chatting with a neighbor and discovered he was an avid gardener and participant in PHS's City Gardens Contest. Soon afterwards, he invited me to visit his backyard paradise—a lush, cozy garden safely tucked away from the bustle and noise of city life. Philadelphia is filled with such inspiring, hard-to-find spaces. Indeed, you'll find everything from tranquil rowhouse backyards to rooftop perches with dramatic skyline views, not to mention community vegetable gardens sprawling entire city blocks.



John Gouker

To acknowledge the skill and imagination that are required for gardening in the city, the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society created a spirited, yet friendly competition back in 1975. Today, the City Gardens Contest, with the cooperation of Penn State's Urban Gardening program, features entries of all sizes and types, from tiny private gardens to enormous community ones...and everything in between. Let's visit a few.

LET THE GAMES BEGIN...

"Judging city gardens is a little like ranking figure skating," admits Walt Fisher, a vigorous PHS volunteer and 10-year veter-



an judge. In the preliminary evaluation round, three-person judging panels scour neighborhoods across the city, ranking the entries on a number of criteria, including plant variety and suitability, horticultural practice, design, and visual effect. A number of categories are employed for individual and community entries, including vegetable and flower gardens, as well as children's spaces and "garden blocks" filled with overflowing window boxes and side-walk planters. Friendly "bribes" from the gardeners—in the form of homemade cookies and pies—are abundant. "We try not to let those things influence us," says the ever honorable Walt.

From Society Hill to North Philadelphia, the contest not only offers recognition, but also an opportunity for the gardeners to receive helpful tips from the judges, who are chosen for their willingness to criss-cross Philadelphia on hot summer days without getting lost, as well as for their horticultural abilities. It has proved to be an unforeseen gift to the evaluators, too. "It's a real learning process for us, especially for those of us who come from the suburbs," adds Walt. "We gain a better understanding of life in the city, and of how people create these inspiring, magnificent spaces. It's a humbling experience."

A scenic nook in Henry Lopez's garden, filled with pelargoniums, morning glories, Dusty Miller, and other summer favorites.

After the preliminary round, the top-scoring gardens go through a final judging process that determines first, second, and third prizes. These folks are invited to the awards ceremony, held in October at the Pennsylvania Convention Center, which features a visual showcase of the gardens. There, the winning gardeners are inevitably beaming with pride alongside pictures of their gardens.

Steven Maciejewski (center) and fellow residents in their community garden in the 2000 block of Fitzwater Street.



photo courtesy of Steven Maciejewski

COMMUNITY TREASURES

"The idea for the garden started with a half-dozen of us," reflects Stephen White, who gardens in Philadelphia's Fairmount section. "We saw an opportunity to do something productive with a parcel of land that formerly held neglected houses, some of which were havens of drug activity and a drain on our neighborhood." Now in its fifth growing season, the Spring Gardens at 18th & Wallace Streets envelopes nearly an entire block and reflects the diversity of the community. In all, 160 African-American, Puerto Rican, Asian, and white families tend plots. "Before we started, I only knew a couple of Puerto Rican families by name," Stephen reflects. "Now, I've gotten to know 30 families and others outside the garden as well."

The Spring Gardens group has participated in the Contest the past three years, winning awards that have helped them acquire name recognition and strengthen their funding appeals. The garden's plots range from "down and

dirty" vegetable mini-farms to intricately arranged flower gardens used for relaxation and contemplation. Stephen notes that preparing for a visit from the judges is a matter of pride. "We want the garden looking its best and feel rewarded when we're acknowledged," he says.

Another story unfolds in the 2000 block of Fitzwater Street. Four years ago, Steven Maciejewski and his neighbors decided to create a garden out of a dilapidated vacant lot the size of two row homes. "Our block had no focus before the garden came about," said Steven. "It's really helped to bring us together, and inspired us to undertake other efforts to improve the community."

The garden has earned top honors in the City Gardens Contest for three years. It features nine plots and a sitting area tended by a dozen families and individuals, as well as lots of native plants friendly to butterflies and birds. Maciejewski compares tidying up the garden before the judges' arrival to "cleaning up your home before a party." Steve adds, "It's always good to receive recognition for

hard work. For us, the Contest acts as an excellent motivational tool."

COZY RETREATS

"When we first moved into our house, it was so overgrown in the rear that we didn't even know we *had* a backyard patio," recalls Wilma DeSoto. Wilma and her husband, Alejandro, moved to the Spruce Hill neighborhood in West Philadelphia six years ago, and found that creating a garden out of their secluded backyard would be a challenge. Because of the intense shade, Wilma was inclined to ask a local nursery, "Do you have anything that grows in the dark?" But, in making the best of a tricky situation, she threaded tropical flora with a variety of foliage to create, she says, "an atmosphere of relaxation and calm."

Last year, Wilma entered the City Gardens Contest for the first time, egged on by a friend and fellow gardener. She was then "stunned" to find she had captured first prize for the category of individual container garden. "I thought maybe I won for best omelet," Wilma

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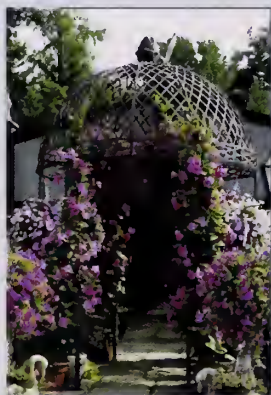
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Above: Wilma and Alejandro DeSoto (inset) relax in their cozy West Philadelphia garden, amidst elephant's ears and other tropical treasures. **Right:** Henry Lopez.

joked, recalling her signature Spanish omelet she served to the judges. Yet follow-up with one of the judges revealed the truth: "Wilma's garden is a soothing, graceful sanctuary. It literally takes you to another place, far removed from the often frantic tempo of city life."

In a neighborhood nestled near the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Henry Lopez turned the small backyard of his rowhouse on the 2500 block of Brown Street into a space reflective of his heritage, showcasing a fountain and hanging baskets overflowing with geraniums and impatiens. The garden also contains, literally, a part of the neighborhood's history. The bricks that line his flowerbeds came from a church built on the corner in 1881 and razed at the time he started his garden, some 15 years ago. Over the



photos this page John Gouker

With Center City skyscrapers looming in the background, numerous ornamental grasses bloom at the Spring Gardens on 18th & Wallace Streets.

past six years, Lopez has won numerous contest honors and thinks of it as a wonderful way to meet his peers. "It's not work for me," he confesses. "It's something I simply enjoy doing."

Indeed, for many Philadelphians, growing a garden is both a way of life and a great way to embrace their communities. "The City Gardens Contest is common ground for people from very different backgrounds who share a love of gardening," notes PHS executive vice president Blaine Bonham. "Through the Contest, many of us involved have been fortunate enough to discover some amazing city gardens and meet some great people along the way." 📷

John Gannon is the Research & Documentation specialist at PHS. He wrote about the Philadelphia Harvest Show in the August 2000 issue.



Volunteers from the Garden Club of Reading tend the landscape at the Reading Public Museum.



SHOWCASING SUBURBAN SPACES

Last year, the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society reached beyond the boundaries of the City Gardens Contest to suburban Philadelphia, New Jersey, and Delaware, recognizing the excellence of public-space plantings. The Society invited nominations of individuals, clubs, civic associations, and others who have created dynamic public green spaces that enhance their communities. Over the summer, 30 nominations were received from as far away as Wyomissing Hills (west of Reading PA), and National Park NJ, along with local towns such as Media and Narberth, PA. The plantings included train stations, public parks, main street planters, church gardens, and landscapes around municipal buildings and museums.

A committee of 13 judges visited the sites. Though these gar-

dens were not competing against each other, it was the task of the committee to determine if each was worthy of recognition by PHS. In the end, 18 public spaces and their representatives were honored at an awards reception last October at PHS's headquarters. Each group received a framed certificate, as well a "Community Greening Award 2000" sign for their garden.

"We're so very pleased with the enthusiastic response to this event, which we've now titled the Suburban Greening Award," says organizer Flossie Narducci of PHS. "We look forward to building on this fertile foundation in the coming years." [For more information on the City Gardens Contest and the suburban competition, contact events manager Flossie Narducci at (215) 988-8897]



Savoring the Flavors of a Lifetime

How to Start Your Own Kitchen Garden

Story by Lorraine Kiefer Photography by Pete Proven



A kitchen garden offers the first flush of tender greens in the spring, crisp sweet peas in June, plump raspberries picked at a midsummer sunrise, heaps of vegetables for picnic suppers, and colorful baskets of pumpkins, peppers, and beans late in fall. It yields lavender for baths and lemon herbs for tea, and bouquets of flowers from the first cherry blossoms in spring to the last roses and salvias of autumn. And how can I forget the pungent horseradish we dig almost all winter long? Kitchen gardens are almost like modern supermarkets—they have everything!

MY GARDEN

I have had a kitchen garden since I was a kid, and this passion has culminated in the large plot that I now tend in South Jersey. I love this place—it is my own outdoor room. A rustic chickenwire fence defines and contains the area in which I grow many beautiful plants. The fence also gives me a place to grow vines and a boundary on which to grow plants that keep animals out and people in.

Along the north fence I have fruit trees reminiscent of old monastery gardens. These are always behind the sun so they never cast a shadow and stunt plant growth. I have interplanted them with very pungent herbs—artemisia, salvias, thyme, chives, hollyhocks, rue, and lavender—that not only provide me with a natural insect repellent to rub on my arms and legs as I work, but keep rabbits and other animals out. The South side of the garden has lavender, raspberry plants, a few blueberries, and rhubarb. The front of the garden beckons all to enter, thanks to a framed gate and vines such as passionflower, black-eyed Susan vine, hyacinth vine, and other colorful blooms.

Inside the garden gate, herbs and perennials grow around the perimeter. This keeps them out of the way of the tiller or hoe; the perennials also insure some decorative camouflage for the inside of the wire fence. You can add cheerful-looking sunflowers just by planting a few seeds randomly along the fence throughout the season. Keep these on the northern side where, like the fruit trees, they won't cast a shadow on the garden.

GETTING STARTED

If you have never had a kitchen garden, now is the time to forge this special bond with the earth. You must start somewhere, so let a pencil be your first tool. List the fruits, vegetables and herbs that you would like to pick fresh, daily, or weekly. Remember, each seed type is different so if you are a novice, consult seed packets, good books, and especially seasoned gardeners, who are often fountains of good information.

Next, list the items that need to be



planted during cool weather. Remember, the old legends say that certain plants should be planted around St. Patrick's Day. From mid-March to mid-April, I put in peas, lettuces, many kinds of greens, radishes, onions, rabe, parsley, calendula, larkspur, and poppies. All of these need a cool season in which to germinate and grow. Finally, walk around your lawn or other open areas and find the spot that gets the most sun during the brightest part of the day.

If the ground has not been used for a garden before, it is a good idea to have the soil tested through the county extension service. All you need to do for this inexpensive test is call your local extension ser-

Above left: A single hollyhock blossom lights up this South Jersey kitchen garden. **Bottom left:** The author at her garden gate. **Above right:** Salad greens are planted in succession all summer long for fresh greens at a moment's notice.

vice and obtain a special prepaid bag in which to send away the soil. You will get a report back telling you how much lime, nutrients, and fertilizer you need to add.

Now it's time to start digging, either by hand or with a gas-powered tiller. It is always a good idea to till extra compost or leaf mold into the soil, as this encourages the growth of organisms that will contribute to the overall health of your new garden. All weeds, sod, rocks, and roots also need to be removed before the garden can be planted. Physically, this is the hardest part of the job, but if well done, will be the foundation of a healthy garden. (Fun tip: throw a pre-garden party and get some friends to come help dig.)

WHAT TO GROW

I try to grow many different varieties of flower and vegetable seed, since there are too many good ones out there to limit myself to the same ones each year. I like pole beans rather than bush, but I plant both—the bush for an early crop and the pole because they are easy to pick and they produce until the very end of the season, often even after being nipped by frost! Although I love to plant seeds best, some-

times I also use starter-packs for early lettuce, cabbage, and kohlrabi.

For herbs, I plant rows of basil, dill, parsley, and sage, which are mostly used for cooking. I seed many kinds of basil and they all grow together in billows of colors from deep green to pale lemon green to purple. The dill that re-seeds in my garden is the most sturdy and beautiful of all, but I also plant rows of it every few weeks just in case. Another rule of thumb—I like to double plant all my herbs and vegetables, so that when one crop is finishing another is ready to take its place.

One of my kitchen-garden favorites is a mesclun mix of greens. I usually have two large areas of lettuces and greens in spring. These are typically put in each week from St. Patrick's Day to Easter or mid-April. I place the latter lettuce in the shade of peas or some other early crop. My light sandy soil heats up in June, so along with adding lots of humus to the soil, this helps extend the lettuce season.

Summer brings a rich bounty of vegetables and flowers, although sometimes we are overwhelmed by quantity. The coming of fall may be bittersweet, but we just keep gardening. There is always that last

lettuce to be sown, the beets that just might still be around for the Christmas Eve borscht, and the tough herbs that defy a frost.

SUSTAINING A GARDEN

A kitchen garden is all about change. Nothing has to be permanent. If the raspberries take over, get rid of them. If you really don't like a certain vegetable, don't grow it. Rotate tomatoes, beans and, certainly, squash and pumpkins. Many pests and diseases "happen" if the same plant is always in the same spot.

Aside from weeding and harvesting crops regularly (this encourages more growth), you should always keep your soil as fertile as possible. My sandy South Jersey soil always needs attention. For more than 30 years, I've added fall leaves, humus, truckloads of manure from local farms, and every scrap of compost I can get.

Still, sand is a handicap during hot, dry spells. To combat it, I have added a volcanic ash (Nature-Gro) and also use a time-release fertilizer (Osmocote), both of which have helped. For pests, I try not to use sprays at all and only use Rotenone as a last resort. So even if you have clay soil (typical in the Delaware Valley), frequently amending it with compost is the best way to maintain a healthy garden.

MEMORIES IN THE GARDEN

Looking back, I realize I have never had a summer without a kitchen garden and a lot of that has been inspired by my family. Both of my grandmothers had huge kitchen gardens, each with a European flair. One, Babci, came from Poland and had a wonderful garden of flowers, herbs, and vegetables. My first memories of her garden go way back, so far that I can remember when her dill was taller than I was. My other grandmother was Italian and she also had an incredible garden. Indeed, the gardens of my grandmothers formed some of my strongest memories of spring, summer and fall. This is surely one of the reasons why kitchen gardening has become one of my life's passions. Luckily for me, my husband Ted likes to work in





Top left: Strawflowers grow randomly amidst a row of beans. **Top right:** Hardy in this Zone 7 garden, *Passiflora incarnata* grows up the front gatepost. **Bottom right:** Lorraine sprinkles larkspur seed in spring to achieve a naturalistic effect later in the season. **Bottom left:** A dried gourd now serves as a bird-house next to the garden.





A row of bamboo supports runs the entire length of the garden, holding up tomatoes and other climbing vegetables.

the garden, too. Indeed, what's a kitchen garden without someone to share it with?

So, just as the first tossed greens of a spring salad or the last pot of late-summer vegetable soup may have a different flavor every time, the kitchen garden can reflect your ever-changing tastes. To me, the pure joy of experimentation and excitement, often lacking in our daily lives, can be

found in the kitchen garden. It's an adventure that the whole family can enjoy...and one that can last a lifetime, too. 🌱

Lorraine Kiefer is the founder of Triple Oaks Nursery, her family business in Franklinville, New Jersey. She also teaches floral design, landscape, herb, and garden classes at the nursery. Lorraine has been a member of PHS since her student days.

LORRAINE'S KITCHEN GARDEN RECIPES

Horseradish/Beet Relish

1 large, scrubbed beet (uncooked)
1 large peeled, tart apple
1 peeled horseradish to taste (a generous amount is best)
1/2 lemon squeezed into juice
Salt to taste

Grate and then mix all the ingredients. Serve on meats, with crackers, or just be creative. A very healthy and delicious treat!

Eastern European Potato Salad

<i>5 lbs. potatoes</i>	<i>1/4 cup horseradish</i>
<i>1 onion, finely chopped</i>	<i>3 tablespoons of freshly chopped dill</i>
<i>1 cup mayonnaise</i>	<i>3 tablespoons of freshly chopped parsley</i>
<i>1 cup sour cream</i>	<i>3-5 celery stalks, chopped</i>
<i>1/4 cup vinegar</i>	<i>Salt and pepper, to taste</i>
<i>1/2 cup sugar</i>	

Cook potatoes, peel and cube, add onion and chopped celery. Mix mayonnaise, sour cream, vinegar, sugar, horseradish, dill, and parsley, as well as salt and pepper to taste. Best to put dressing on warm potatoes, and then allow to sit several hours in the refrigerator before serving.

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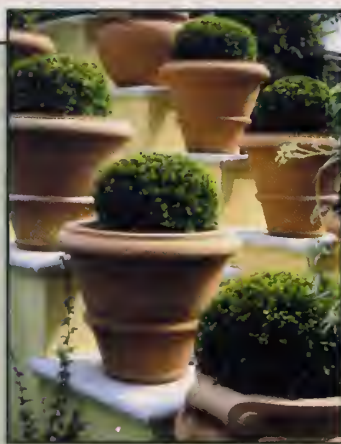
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Oxalis triangularis

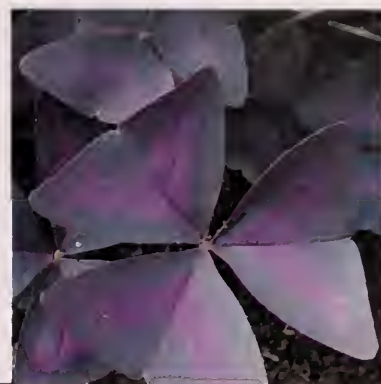
Flora Graphics



A Four-Season Wonder

by Duane Campbell

To my mind, the purple-leaved shamrock, *Oxalis triangularis*, should come with an owner's manual. It's not that this is a fussy plant. It isn't. In fact, it is the perfect duffer's plant, easy to grow, tolerant of different conditions, pest free, dramatic, and versatile. With little effort beyond watering, a small pot purchased in spring and left on the patio or picnic table will grow into a lavish display and convince visitors that you know what you're doing. But come winter, you may feel you need a manual to bring this oxalis into bloom again and then divide it up for next year's garden. Fortunately, it's not as hard as it seems and definitely worth the effort.



Discovered in South America in the 1980s, *O. triangularis* can happily spend the summer in its original 4-inch pot, or you can pot it up a size or two if you want to do something proactive. Give it sun or shade, feed it if you wish, water regularly, but don't panic if you forget. No matter what you do, it forms a perfect foot-high mound, each leaf looking like three moths joined at the nose. The foliage is deep maroon blending into the closest thing to black in horticulture. Rising gracefully above this somber dome is a nimbus of lacy flowers of pale lilac. It's breathtaking. But with frost looming, you may think your oxalis will go the way of the petunias and impatiens. This is when you'll need that owner's manual.

WINTER

Let the first frost knock down the foliage, then prepare for your patio plant to reincarnate itself as a fantastic, trouble-free house plant. Let it dry out for a few days, knock it out of the pot, and scrunch away the soil. You will find a plum-sized clump of rhizomes that looks disgustingly like lawn grubs having an orgy.

As long as plants live under your roof, they must obey your rules. Break up the party. In an 8- or 10-inch pot filled with dry peat-based potting mix, put the individual pieces three inches apart and half an inch deep. Since it is hard to tell which end is up, set them horizontally. They'll want a short rest, but after four to six weeks give them a sip of water and put them in a sunny window. Or a not so sunny window. When purple pokes

above the soil, water more freely.

What was a very nice little plant in a 4-inch pot puts on a glorious show in a larger container. An occasional feeding with a 15-30-15 soluble fertilizer will help it along. The same lacy display of flowers, charming in summer, is a knock-out in mid-winter, when you really need something blooming.

SPRING & SUMMER

In early spring, when the bloom dwindles, stick the pot in the basement and let it dry out and go dormant again. It's time for the third reincarnation as a bedding plant. When you knock the soil out of the pot, you will find that each individual rhizome has again formed a small clump. Break them apart as before.

This oxalis is easier to plant in the ground than marigolds. I shall save for another day my rant on preparing the soil, except to say that, tolerant as this plant is, anything grows better in good soil. Once your bed is fertile and friable, just tuck the rhizomes in an inch deep and 10 inches apart. They'll grow in sun or shade but do best in half sun.

Their striking dark leaves look best contrasted with something light. I put some among the gray leaves of lambs' ears and interplant it with lavender. Or try a small island bed of oxalis bordered with white ageratum. A mass planting filling the space under a pear tree always stops traffic. And I stick in a few to cover the bare shins of an arching shrub rose. Since they grow so fast, I save a few to tuck into bare spots that appear mid-summer.

FALL

Its one shortcoming is that purple-leaf shamrock is not reliably winter hardy. So when the first fall frost knocks down the foliage, you must dig it up. When you do, you will find ... *what?* Let's not see the same hands all the time. *Right*—each corm has formed a small clump. Pot up a few for the winter, but the rest need to be stored.

Even here they're amenable, as easy to store as glads. I keep the excess over the winter in a mesh onion bag hanging from the joists in the basement. They do need some air, because during the growing season they form a second kind of tuber, a white, fleshy carrot-like root, which shrivels away during storage. In a closed bag it could get moldy.

Once again, *Oxalis triangularis* is a great plant for those with not-so-green thumbs, because it is so easy to grow. Yet connoisseurs and designers also love it for its beauty and versatility. Best of all, it's a tightwad's plant: one \$2 investment will give you patio plants, winter flowers, and bedding material for the rest of your life. ☐

Duane Campbell has been writing for *Green Scene* since 1992.

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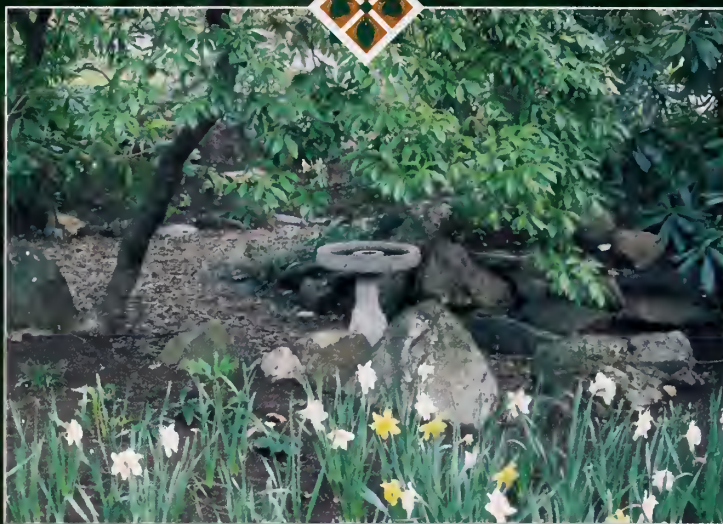


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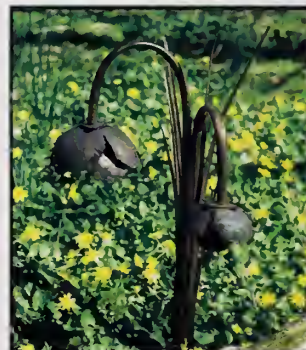
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Exposing "Organic" Pesticides

Love the *Green Scene*! Keep up the good work, but I do have a small quibble with the Garden Net sidebar in the December, 2000 issue. In the segment titled "Don't Panic—Go Organic," an incorrect distinction is made between "chemical" and "organic" pesticides. The correct distinction should be between synthetic chemicals and botanical/natural chemicals. The so-called "natural" pesticide extracted from chrysanthemums is pyrethrum, which is a chemical. George Wagner, quoted in the sidebar, was in fact spraying "chemicals" around his garden. The oils he used were also chemicals.

Both synthetic and botanical pesticides range from relatively non-toxic to highly toxic. Some natural pesticides are substantially more toxic than common synthetic pesticides. A common misconception is that all synthetic pesticides are bad and all "natural" or organic pesticides are good. This naive approach to pesticide use can be quite dangerous. For example, Rotenone, a commonly used "organic" pesticide, is quite toxic and harmful to fish and most mammals. Researchers at Emory University have recently found a possible link between Rotenone and Parkinson's Disease.

What is most important when gar-

dening is to be fully informed about the pesticides, synthetic or biological, that one is using. A small book produced by the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, *Natural Insect Control*, offers useful information on understanding biological pesticides. Whitney Cranshaw's chapter on "Natural Pesticides" is particularly helpful.

In your sidebar, George Wagner and Joy Bell are quoted as saying they prefer to not be exposed to chemicals when they are working in their gardens. Such comments reveal a total misunderstanding of chemistry. Those gardeners are very much using chemicals. Such comments can mislead readers and contribute further to the abysmally low level of general scientific knowledge among the population at large. The key here is to be well-informed and avoid using either botanical or synthetic chemicals without clearly knowing what you are doing.

Arthur M. Kroll
via email

A Low-Maintenance Lover

I enjoyed the December 2000 issue's "Letter from the Editor." Like you, I made my garden "low maintenance" by mulching heavily to discourage weeds and making it just the right size, so man-

aging it is fun and not a chore. It's experimental, too, which explains why some plants make it and some don't. But over the years I have slowly worked and expanded the garden so that it provides my family with weekly bouquets of fresh flowers for my office and home.

My garden also does not discriminate between perennials and annuals. In fact, I find they get along nicely. In the summer I like to come home after work and "putz" around the garden, deadheading flowers, pulling weeds, and trimming. I find it relaxing and comforting to make this connection with nature. The daily ritual (maybe 15 minutes) keeps the garden and my spirit in shape. I guess my computer screen saver says it all: "You can be both in heaven and on earth in a garden."

Suzanne Schorle
via email

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The PASSIONATE PERENNIALIST

BY BEVERLY FITTS

Mellow Yellow

Have you ever been smitten with an idea and just had to see it happen? Well, I have, and the idea was yellow foliage—yellow foliage mixed with pastel violet, red/violet and pink flowers near the porch we use for summer living.

My “mellow yellow” garden began with some golden lemon balm (*Melissa officinalis* ‘Aurea’) that I got from a friend. To develop the idea, another friend gave me a yellow barberry (*Berberis thunbergii* ‘Aurea’), and a Japanese spirea (*Spirea japonica* ‘Limemound’). Then I bought another spirea myself, *S. thunbergii* ‘Mellow Yellow’.

Caught up in the idea of plants with yellow foliage, I intermingled golden feverfew (*Tanacetum parthenium* ‘Aureum’), golden creeping Jenny (*Lysimachia nummularia* ‘Aurea’), and the charmingly delicate *Origanum minutifolium* ‘Norton’s Gold’. The result was dazzling.

For flower color I chose tints of violet, red/violet and pink, with occasional whites to integrate the flower garden with the white paint of the porch. That summer, searching for plants to complete my vision became a passion. You know how it is. The latest plant with yellow foliage was a “must have.” By the following spring the shrubs took hold and the perennials bloomed profusely. I stood back and took stock. Mellow yellow it wasn’t. A brazen hussy was more like it.

What went wrong? The word “yellow,” for a start. Yellow foliage isn’t really yellow. It’s varying shades of yellow/green,

rich with undertones and nuance. There’s the yellow/green we call chartreuse, the slightly greener lime, and the yellower yellow/greens we often label “gold.” Plus—and here’s where I got into trouble—many yellow-foliaged plants

greener yellow/greens look better with cool. Now I know it’s true.

However, my eye still danced around following the pulsating beat of yellow foliage sprinkled throughout the backyard. That’s when experience taught what I already knew in theory. Yellow demands attention. Use it to create emphasis. So, I consolidated all my yellow foliage into the new bed, moving plants here and there like furniture, until I found just the right balance of form, texture and color. The garden started looking good.

By mid-May, increasing shade turned the spireas a smooth chartreuse, and all seemed right. Not quite. As the sun climbed higher in the springtime sky and reached the barberry nestled in the darkest corner of the house and porch, the barberry’s lovely chartreuse

foliage turned neon yellow.

What’s a gardener to do? Lament the saga of yellow foliage to all who would listen of course. “Give it some time,” my friends responded, and they were right. Under the expanded foliage of tall oaks, the barberry changed to a likable lime. I smiled with relief and satisfaction.

So, take heed. If you’re planning a yellow foliage garden, consider your color scheme carefully. Know if a plant changes color as the season progresses, and keep in mind that yellow foliage demands attention. Then, you too, can bask in the gentle glow of a “mellow yellow” garden. ☐



Beverly Fitts

change color as the season progresses.

For instance, my spireas begin a strident neon yellow. Never my favorite color, neon yellow was especially brazen against ‘Hino-Crimson’ azaleas that peeked through from another part of the property. At first, I tried to bridge the two colors by adding orange tulips. The combination went from bad to shocking—not the effect I was after. So, I cut off the orange tulips, and moved the crimson azaleas. The garden improved immediately. Pam Harper mentions in her book, *Time Tested Plants*, that yellower yellow/greens (like my spireas) look better with warm colors, while

Beverly Fitts is a busy garden lecturer, photographer, and former president of the Hardy Plant Society/Mid-Atlantic Group.



BY ADAM LEVINE

The Scoop on Digging Tools

20 years back, like many American gardeners of the day, I looked across the ocean to England for guidance and inspiration. I coveted the English flower border and tried with only slight success to create one in my West Philadelphia community garden. I had a go at delphiniums, which flopped with such regularity that I began telling people I had discovered a new species: *Delphinium horizontalis*. I bought expensive English gardening tools from fancy mail-order catalogues, reasoning that if the Brits used them, they must be the best.

My first such purchase, one I fell madly in love with for a time, was a beautifully made English spade. I used it often, even though the short handle put 6-foot-me into a painful stoop, and the straight blade didn't easily penetrate the rubble-filled soil in my vacant lot-turned-garden. I edged many garden beds with this tool, a job for which it is well designed. But for the most part, when I look back on this affair, I see that I was always more taken with the idea of this fancy spade than its actual functionality. This tool now sits in my garage, mostly ignored, supplanted by one I've found to be far more useful: the round-point shovel.

An American invention, this shovel is yet another sign of how my gardening has come home to its roots to encompass the native plants and tools I once held in disdain. These shovels come in a variety of styles—with different blades and handle lengths—that make it useful for gardeners of any size and strength. With this shovel I can dig planting holes from quart-size to tree-size, turn soil in new or

existing beds, remove deep-rooted weeds, or excavate small stones, accomplishing all these tasks more efficiently than I did with a spade. The pointed blade more easily penetrates hard-packed soils than

socket of the blade. The higher up the handle the joint goes, and the more solid and secure the fit, the better. But beware: no matter how well made, the handle of any digging tool may snap if improperly used. Avoid prying, the most common handle-breaker. Instead, try using a mattock or saw for stubborn roots, or a steel pry bar to dig out well-entrenched stones.

A common shoveling task—one that people don't always accomplish in the most efficient manner—is moving piles of various materials. The best tool for the job depends on the type of material and the surface it sits on. To move topsoil or gravel piled on a hard, smooth surface, such as an asphalt driveway, use a square-point or flat shovel. With a straight edge on its wide, flat blade and slightly curved lips on either side, this tool is best for scooping tasks on even surfaces. If a pile of soil or gravel is an uneven surface, such as a lawn, a round-point shovel would be preferable to any flat-bladed tool.

Of course, shovels aren't the only tools for scooping and picking up. When moving a pile of organic material, like leaf mold or shredded hardwood mulch, don't reach for any kind of shovel or spade. Try using a five-tine pitchfork instead. The thin tines penetrate easily, without the niggling and nudging required to get a shovel into the pile, and the tool will hold a surprising amount of material.

So before you tackle your next digging or lifting job, take a second to think about the best tool for the job. Be it a round-tip shovel, flat-tip one, or good ol' pitchfork, the right scooping tool will make the chore infinitely easier. ☑



even a sharpened spade. The larger head and deeper curve holds more soil than a spade, and for a person of average height or above, the longer handle provides more leverage and allows the work to be done with far less stooping.

Most shovels available at hardware stores and garden centers are made of pressed steel and aren't nearly as solid as my forged-steel English spade. When buying a shovel or any digging tool, look for the terms "forged," "drop forged" or "heat tempered," which indicate a better quality tool. And pay particular attention to the joint where the handle meets the

A frequent *Green Scene* contributor, Adam Levine also writes for *Garden Design* and *This Old House*, among other magazines.



UNCOMMON GROUNDCOVERS

BY PATRICIA A. TAYLOR

Counting on Bearberry

A beautiful, four-season groundcover, bearberry (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*) is uncommon in many ways. Let me count them. First, it belongs to a select group of “circumpolar species,” which are plants native throughout the Northern Hemisphere. Unlike the great majority of plants, these flora never speciated as they migrated about Europe, Asia, and North America.

Second, bearberry is an exceptionally adaptable plant, thriving in many different conditions. Michael Dirr, in his *Manual of Woody Landscape Plants*, tells of seeing it on the sunny, wind-lashed beaches of Cape Cod. Nancy O'Donnell of PHS's Philadelphia Green uses it as a striking groundcover on a somewhat shaded, air-polluted slope along John F. Kennedy Boulevard in the city.

Third, it is technically a shrub, member of a genus that garden writer Carole Ottesen has described as one of the most complex in our country. The majority of *Arctostaphylos* species are native only to California, with some appearing in tree form and topping out at 20 feet. All are popularly called manzanitas, a Spanish term meaning little apples; this is as good a description as any of the small red fruit. Fourth, it contains potent chemicals within its leaves and has long been used in folk medicine to treat urinary tract infections. For people who go out of their way to try uncommon plants, bearberry clearly has a lot of plusses.

Most important for me, however, is that bearberry needs very little attention. This non-invasive, 6- to 12-inch tall groundcover never needs to be fertilized or pruned. It doesn't require watering, except

under extreme drought conditions. I can personally vouch for the fact that rabbits, cats, squirrels, raccoons, and groundhogs usually leave it alone. The jury is out on whether or not it is favored by deer, with some literature saying it is deer-proof and other sources reporting that deer some-

red fruits appear a month or so after the flowers. According to some literature, they persist into winter; I think this only happens in birdless areas. I barely get to see the little red decorations on my plants because birds, and perhaps other wildlife, devour them so quickly.

In summer, I surround my bearberry plants with low-growing annuals, such as 'Crystal White' zinnias, soft yellow dwarf marigolds, and blue ageratum. In Philadelphia Green projects, Nancy pairs her bearberry planting on an urban bank with patches of warm green sweet woodruff (*Galium odoratum*) and dark green ivy (*Hedera helix*) to create an attractive picture of contrasting leaf forms and colors. In winter, the stems and leaves on the plant acquire red tones and look absolutely smashing when backed by a light dusting of snow.

Many cultivars have entered the market. 'Vancouver Jade' has lush, jade-green leaves, while 'Radiant' [pictured above] has larger berries than those on other plants. And 'Emerald Green' forms a dense, dark green carpet. Forestfarm (www.forestfarm.com) offers these and many more. I grow 'Massachusetts', largely because it is an East Coast selection.

Nancy O'Donnell was unfamiliar with bearberry when she first planted it two years ago, but today, she's counting the number of Philadelphia Green projects where she can use it (most recently, the re-landscaping of the Philadelphia Museum of Art). "I'm extremely impressed with it," she says. I think you will be, too. ■



Flora Graphics

times graze upon it. So far, the occasional deer strolling down my street has passed it by. The popular name, however, leads me to conclude that bears favor it. (Happily, I cannot personally verify this.)

Hummingbirds and nectar-seeking insects love this plant, attracted to its white to soft pink flowers that look like miniature bellflowers. These dot the rich green, succulent-like foliage in mid spring. The leaves are lanceolate in appearance (long and narrow, i.e., “lance shaped”) and no longer than an inch. The

Many other little known groundcovers are described in Taylor's book on *Easy Care Native Plants* (Holt).

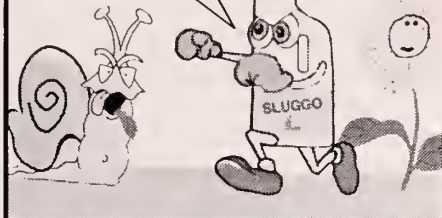
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BACKYARD

Patricia A. Taylor

A Bountiful First Harvest

Tales of a First-Time Gardener

It was with admiration and—yes, I admit it—jealousy that I gazed at Dorothy Mullen's street display in Princeton, New Jersey last summer. Here was a beautiful first-year vegetable garden that was so bountiful its creator had to post a sign telling passersby to help themselves to flowers and vegetables.

How could a novice pull off such a stunt? It turns out that Dorothy did it by the book...literally. Checking Dick Raymond's *New Kitchen Garden* (New England Press) out of the library, she closely followed its guidelines. First, she looked for a sun-filled spot on her property. The only area that met the requirement was taken up by a privacy screen of 20-foot high hemlocks. With nary a qualm, she had the trees dug out in the fall. She then enriched the soil in the 15 x 60-foot cleared area with six yards of compost from the nearby Belle Mead Farmer's Coop and overplanted it with winter rye. The following spring, she had the rye rototilled into the soil, creating raised planting mounds in the process.

Deer are a big problem in our area, strolling down streets and munching everything as they go. To fight back, Dorothy fenced in all but 10 feet of the area. Then came planting time. Using heirloom seeds primarily bought via mail order from Seeds of Change (www.seedsofchange.com), she planted beans, squash, tomatoes, peppers, lettuce, and other vegetables. Outside the fence she put in what she hoped would be deer-resistant plants: three dozen basil plants, bought as seedlings at a local garden center, along with cleomes and marigolds.

When the ensuing harvest proved to be more than she and her three children could handle, Dorothy decided to share her bounty. She posted a sign that stressed her organic approach, as well as the fact that the produce could be eaten on the spot. "If I'd known that developing an environmental conscience paid off so well, I'd have gone the 'green manure' route years ago," says this new gardener.

As for me, well, maybe I'm not so jealous. Maybe I'm just thankful that Dorothy is so generous that I don't need to redo my vegetable garden after all. Perhaps that's what neighbors are for.

—Patricia A. Taylor

Welcome!

This is the Mullens' "moreganic" garden.

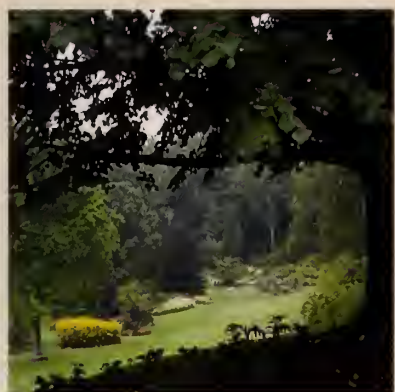
"Moreganic" simply means more organic. The vegetables are grown on "green manure" (a winter grass crop grown exclusively to till into the soil the following spring) and compost and are supplementally fed only with granular organic fertilizer. No pesticides have been used.

Many of the vegetables are grown from heirloom seeds, which differ from hybrids inasmuch as you can harvest the seed and grow basically the same plant the next year.

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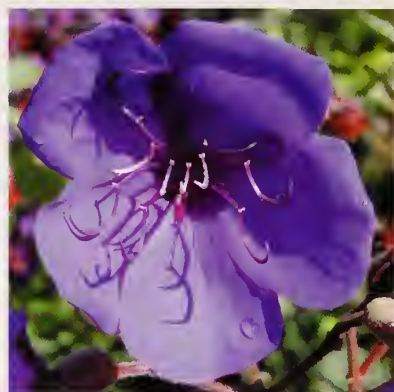
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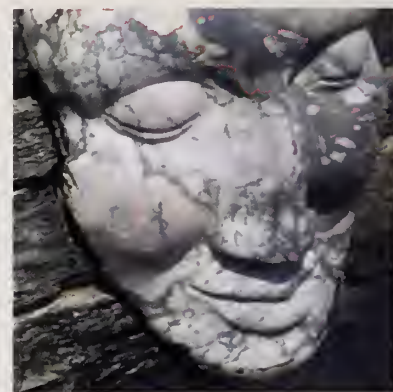
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Marby Sparkman leads us through a Bryn Mawr garden that is a true masterpiece of verticality. Its owner/designer has a natural instinct for adding height to her property and reaches for the heavens at every opportunity. If you have your feet on the ground, but your head in the clouds, then read on....

14 Great Tall Plants

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The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society motivates people to improve the quality of life and create a sense of community through horticulture.

Cover Photo by Pete Prown

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GREEN scene

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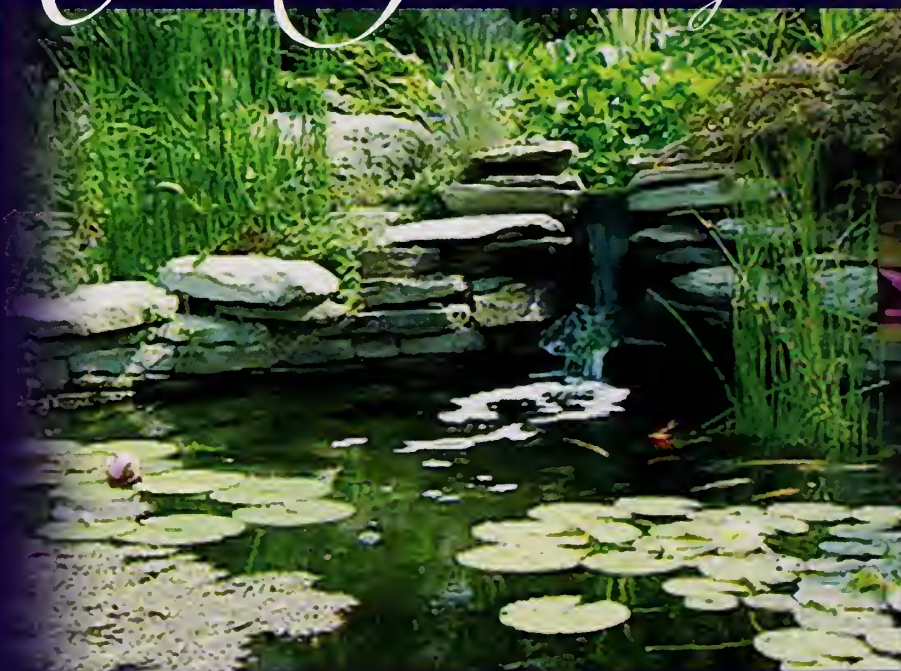
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Growing Up

Welcome to our annual “single subject” issue of *Green Scene*. This year, we decided to tackle the, dare I say, lofty subject of height in the garden. Unless you are intentionally growing a *parterre* or an intricate Dutch knot garden, a flat garden is rarely attractive. But add a few vertical accents that draw the eye upwards, and suddenly that same garden becomes an exciting, dynamic space.

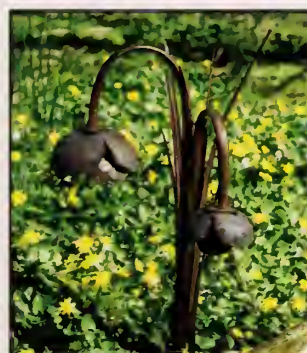
In this issue, we approach the height question from several vantage points. Along with a “Height 101” primer to start things off, we have included stories on interesting tall plants and climbing vines, growing vegetables vertically (to save space and increase yield), and even one on the basics of starting an espalier. We are also treated to private tours of a very “tall” garden on the Main Line and a wonderful city garden in Philadelphia, both of which use vertical space in novel ways.

We hope that these tall tales will inspire you to take a second look at your own garden and decide if you’re making the most of its upward possibilities. If not, maybe it’s time to “raise” your expectations and try something new. Remember, the sky’s the limit.

Pete Prown
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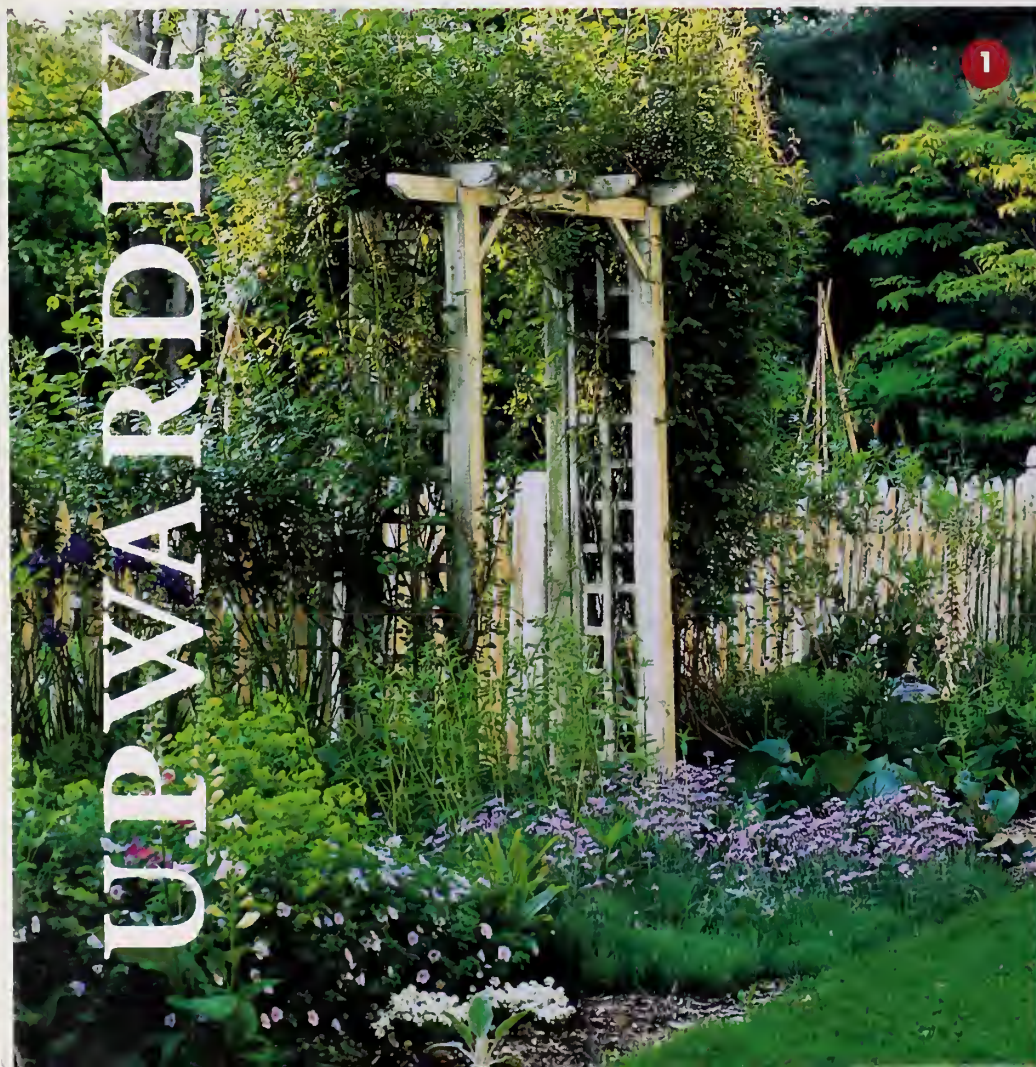
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MOBILE

10 Quick, Easy Ways to Add Height to Your Garden

Is your garden suffering from a case of the dreaded “flat and boring syndrome?” If so, a quick shot of height will help alleviate the symptoms. Here are 10 easy ways to give your garden some much-needed vertical lift.



1 ARCHES & PERGOLAS

The classic vertical accent in a garden is, of course, the **arch**. From a romantic wrought-iron arch covered with roses to a dramatic Zen entryway carefully pegged together in wood, arches are an easy way to draw the eye upwards. Better still, they are available everywhere, from nurseries and home centers to mail-order catalogs and the Internet.

For even more drama, consider a pergola that would cover your favorite walkway. What could be more enchanting than strolling down a walk with roses and clematis blowing in the wind over your head. Granted, it's more laborious to build one, but the results are well worth it. *[For more on building pergolas, see page 36.]* And if neither an arch nor a pergola suit you, there's always the **covered bench**, perfect for sitting out the heat of summer under a canopy of lovely, fragrant blossoms.

2 FENCES, GATES & WALLS

Alas, people don't employ garden walls as much as they should, especially in the US, where they are considered anti-social and undemocratic. But **walls** and their less-expensive cousins, **wooden fences**, can neatly delineate a garden space from the rest of one's property. In addition, they can create privacy and, with solid construction, help reduce nearby road noise. You can also attach wires or a trellis to your wall and grow anything on it, from peas to fruit trees.

To top it off, you can get a garden gate to finish the picture, be it a humble wooden one or one of the amazing iron creations from local artisan Greg Leavitt, whose work has been featured at the Philadelphia Flower Show (you can contact the artist at Upper Bank Forge, 610-358-1766).

3 ELEVATED FOCAL POINTS

A well-placed focal point can make a garden; a poorly sited one can ruin it. To add verticality to a scene, consider a **tall**

sculpture, an Asian lantern or a decorative plaque, such as the one hung here on a tree at Meadowbloom, a garden in northern Chester County (for tour information, call 610-495-5187.)

To learn more, a good starting point would be Beverly Fitts' article on placing ornaments from the August 2000 issue. As she reminds us, it's important to keep in mind that one focal point may be plenty. Don't clutter your garden space with too many, because it's easy to ruin a pretty picture.

4 GRASSES

If your idea of adding height is to find something easy and foolproof, buy ornamental grasses. Properly sited and planted, favorites like **pampas grass** (*Cortaderia selloana*), ravenna grass (*Saccharum ravennae*, syn. *Erianthus*), **fountain grass** (*Pennisetum alopecuroides* or *P. setaceum*) and **switch grass** (*Panicum virgatum*) will thrive and look beautiful, especially in winter (though be wary of the popular *Miscanthus sinensis*, which can be somewhat invasive).

And here's a grassy head's up: **The feather reed grass 'Karl Foerster'** (*Calamagrostis* x *acutifolia*, pictured at right in foreground) has been selected as the 2001 Plant of the Year by the Perennial Plant Association.

5a & 5b ART & SCULPTURE

A classical nude. A traditional gazing ball. Or something completely different, like this pot sculpture "man" from Garden Accents in Conshohocken, PA (610-825-5525). Wherever your tastes lie, a fine piece of artwork can both enliven a garden and give it energy. You can buy it or make it yourself. The key to finding art, of course, is to choose something you truly like *vs.* something you think will impress the neighbors. Express yourself, like artist Ross Barrable's 8-foot tall "Windsinger" sculptures, which bring the element of sound to the garden (available from Gardenium, 215-247-6846).



PHOTO CREDITS:

1-2. Rob Cordillo
3-4. Pete Prown

5a. Garden Accents
5b. Soundscapes In't.

THE ROTTING SHED



6a



7



9



6b



8



10

6a & 6b TRELLISES & OBELISKS

For functional art, try a trellis or obelisk. A trellis can range from simple wire mesh or wooden lathe attached to a few posts to a stand-alone garden obelisk covered with peas, beans or climbing ornamental vines. Another version is this interesting **wall trellis** offered by Kinsman Company of Point Pleasant, PA (800-396-1251).

Another skyward-reaching garden ornament that rarely gets mentioned is the birdhouse. Be it a lowly box on a wooden post or an ornate villa for visiting purple martins, birdhouses will not only serve as a habitat for our fine-feathered friends, but also draw our eyes toward the trees and sky.

7 TALL & CLIMBING PLANTS

Perhaps the easiest way to bring height into your gardenscape is by adding tall and climbing plants. For the tall 'n' spiky look, try **foxglove, snapdragons, lilies, daylilies, cleome, foxtail lilies, veronica, eupatorium**, and countless others. Keep in mind, however, that some tall plants will need staking to protect them from the perils of wind and rain—a small price to pay, however, for their majestic beauty.

And if you have space, plant climbing vines. As children, we all grew morning glories, but now it's time to flex your gardening muscles with roses (like the red 'Don Juan', white 'Lace Cascade' or pale pink 'New Dawn' varieties), clematis (try old-standbys like 'Jackmanii' and *C. montana*), and honeysuckle galore. For easy-to-grow annual vines, you can find an entire article devoted to the subject in the May/June 2000 issue of *Green Scene*. [Back issues and reprints available for a small fee at 215-988-8769.] There are literally thousands of great climbers to choose from...and woefully little time to try them all!

8 CONTAINERS & PLANT STANDS

These days, everybody is growing plants in containers, so why not figure them into your height designs. Indeed, a potted plant doesn't have to stay on the

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- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| 6a. Rob Cardilla | 8. Walter Chandoha |
| 6b. Kinsman | 9. P. Meyer |
| 7. Marge Garfield | 10. Pete Prawn |

ground. Hanging containers are easy to assemble and install, whether it's on a hook by the front door or on a tree branch out back. Put them on top of retaining walls or tree stumps (and don't forget windowboxes, either). With a wrought-iron plant stand, you can build a whole collection of interesting potted plants—even a stepladder will do. Container gardening is a world unto itself and, for the creative designer in all of us, a terrific way to emphasize height.

9 WOODY PLANTS


Trees and shrubs are another great way to add height and structure to your garden. Like walls, woody plants can provide a background to your herbaceous garden, as well as adding ornamental colors and textures all their own. But seasoned planters also put small trees and shrubs in their gardens, knowing that the woody architecture will be attractive even in the dead of winter.

For a good source of trees and shrubs, look no further than **PHS's Gold Medal Plant Awards**. This is a list of woodies selected by area horticultural experts for their growing excellence in the Delaware Valley. To see the list of past and present Gold Medal winners, visit our website at www.libertynet.org/phs or call (215) 988-8824.

10 KIDS!

Whether they're yours or grandchildren or the kids from down the block, young people can add a compelling vertical touch to the garden. Think about it—not only can you watch them grow over the years, but you can also **plant a seed** for tomorrow's generation of gardeners. (Just remind them not to play stickball in the lilies and everything will be just dandy.)

(BONUS TIP!) LIGHTING

Use outdoor lights to spotlight a patch of towering ornamental grass or interesting tree at night. Not only will this add another vertical dimension to your garden, but also an air of theatrical drama. And as all gardeners know, the show must go on! 

—Pete Prown

Turning Shrubs into Trees

By Ann L. Reed



vive a move. A good friend had the answer. "Lift it!" she said. I'm not sure at that point that I knew what she meant, but after she explained the term, I knew we had our answer.


Lifting a shrub or tree means simply cutting off some of the lower branches. In the case of the pieris, this changed the natural form of the shrub into a tree. What a difference a few branches made! After the operation, our view underneath

Fifteen years ago, we moved into a wonderful old stone home in Mt. Airy. One of the selling points of the two-acre property was that it had originally been landscaped by Philadelphia's renowned landscape architect, Frederick Peck, around 1960.

When we arrived 25 years later, the landscape had matured and was in need of renovation. The large and beautiful specimen rhododendron, azalea, laurel, and pieris shrubs had grown so big that the view of the property from the house was completely blocked.

We wanted to save each and every shrub, so we moved them with great care to the perimeter of the property. However, there was a large, 20-foot pieris that was planted between rocks, and there was no way that it would sur-

round the shrub to the rest of the property was unimpeded. We also had a wonderful small tree in the perfect place to add vertical scale to that portion of the garden. To me the best and completely unexpected result was the extraordinary gnarled, twisted, shaggy, reddish trunk that appeared from this grand old shrub. It instantly enhanced the garden as a piece of natural sculpture.

If you have mature shrubs—such as pieris, azalea, or other interesting, woody plants—and you'd like a change, consider altering their form by "lifting" them. You will provide a vertical element in the garden, give your landscape a fresh vista, and add to your available planting area. You may even be as lucky as we were and find a piece of sculpture hidden in one tree's trunk. 



REACHING FOR THE SKY

*Vertical Accents Abound in a
Main Line Garden*

Story by Marban M. Sparkman Photography by Pete Proven

All elements in this special hillside garden lead upwards, pushing towards something beyond and above. Stone steps point the way up and up again from one garden tier to the next. Vine covered arbors form a series of garden rooms, and trellises provide vertical growing space for an abundance of climbing roses. The tallest plants dominate the top of the garden where 10-foot-high grasses sway in the breeze. At the summit, a grove of *Robinia* trees blooms yellow against the blue sky.



Top: Adirondack-style arches and pergolas dot the landscape of Fran's garden.

Bottom: *Hydrangea petiolaris* grows up the side of the house with abandon.

"Height elevates in a spiritual sense"

This complex, multi-tiered garden is how Fran Sorin—landscape designer and TV gardening guru for the *Weekend Today Show*—responded to what she describes as her “vertically challenged half-acre suburban lot” in Bryn Mawr. Everywhere you look in Fran’s garden, the eye is drawn upward. From below—at street level—randomly spaced rows of *Taxus* lead up the steep lawn to a vine-covered house smothered in roses and clematis. Metal arches support a canopy of heirloom roses that crowns the crest of the hill, punctuating its height. Barely visible behind the arbor, the front door seems like the entrance to a walled garden covered with exuberant *Hydrangea petiolaris*. And this is just the front door—only halfway up.

The narrow, steeply graded backyard presented a major challenge to Fran’s vision of sprawling naturalized bounty. To claim the land, she first had to tame the hillside—to make an asset of its height. But *how*? Inspired by the feel of antiquity found in old English gardens, she wanted to capture that sense of permanence and ancestry she found so soothing. Classic English dry wall was the clue. The answer was a double row of retaining walls to stave off mudslides and buttress three level tiers of gardening space, one above the other.

Such extensive masonry took several years to complete. First came a terrace the length of the house backed by a 4-foot wall that edged a second elevation. Two years later, another wall that ranged 7 to 9 feet high gave access to the top of the hill. When township regulations prohibited dry wall, masons devised a cement-backed look-alike studded with plastic tubing—the modernized version of nooks and crannies—where *Campanula*, *Dianthus*, *Aubrieta*, and *Cerastium tomentosum* grow happily to soften the impact of the stone surface. With this basic structure, the hillside was tamed. [To read more about the actual re-landscaping of Fran’s property, see the story in the January, 1996 issue.]

Finally, it was time to garden. A romantic who “loves vines draping all over things,” Fran next designed a series of pergolas and trellises to balance the height of the walls and relieve their strong linear plane. Hand-made of thick, barkless, cedar posts, these structures have an authentic, rustic look reminiscent of southern France and, like the

er—it's like reaching toward the sky."

walls, give the illusion of having been there a very long time. In a small garden where too many different elements distract, using the same rustic cedar throughout provides continuity. Unadorned, the sturdy forms have a sculptural quality that adds interesting variations of height and depth to the garden. And once covered with vines, they offer different perspectives on the shape and color of the blooms.

"Everything flat on the same plane is limiting," according to Sorin. "The beauty of a trellis is that it offers many different planes." Roses, clematis, and sweet peas twine up opposite sides of an arbor to meet in a burst of color at the top. Robust Wisteria forms a roof, adding an outdoor room to the house. Clashing orange *Campsis* (trumpet creeper) and purple-podded *Bignonia* scramble over an arbor to shade a garden bench.

The pergolas invite exploration and suggest something more is happening in the garden, just on the other side. They offer cool, scented shade and promise sunlight beyond. Sometimes flanked by tall evergreen hedges, strategically placed pergolas and arches create garden rooms. For Sorin, "the beauty of this garden is its sense of mystery and surprise. The height of the walls and the tall trees make the space feel bigger and more elegant, the same way that tall ceilings seem to create space in a room."

Behind the second tier of the garden, the walls tower 9-feet high in places. For vertical distraction to break up the flat plane of the stone, 5-foot tall rectangular towers—resembling oversized tomato cages—support an explosion of climbing roses that reach toward the top of the wall. They are colorful punctuation marks. Their sturdy three-dimensionality provides extra growing space on different planes where colors can be repeated. Standing tall in the midst of the border the flowering towers echo the colors of surrounding shrubs and perennials. "Height," says Sorin "intensifies color." Roses growing over these towers have a special beauty: the play of light, the scent, even the shape of the blossoms are all affected by the height.

Maintenance is no issue for this gardener who claims to find relaxation at the top of a ladder. Fran encourages the vines to twine through their cages—tying them back when necessary—and then lets them drape over the top. An organic gardener, she prunes out branches that are scarred by black spot,



along with any stragglers that mar her aesthetic vision. Roses of every description—heirloom roses 'Darlow's Enigma' (white), 'Mme. Alfred Carriere' (pink), and the Meidiland rose, 'Eden Rose'—seem to thrive on this regimen.

While the "caged" roses march in ranks through the 6-foot-deep perennial beds, the rest of the middle tier is more restrained. Fran refers to it as a Mediterranean garden, perhaps because of the allée of *Tilia cordata* trees (little leaf linden) that provides shade and vertical strength at one end. Or perhaps in reference to the fountain on the other side where blackened water gives the pool a mysterious depth—a play on the surrounding heights.

Ten more steps lead to the top tier, a "meandering English garden" that sits 15 feet above the terrace. The height offers a bird's eye view—a perspective not found in many gardens. As the largest plants frame the back of a traditional border, the tallest perennials and grasses spike upward from the peak of this garden. Broad mounds of *Panicum virgatum* (switch grass) and *Miscanthus* sp. (giant silver grass) reach 8 and 10 feet above the wall. When they sway in the wind, the grasses have tremendous movement. "It's like being on the Nile," says Fran. The garden is enveloping, the height of the plants cuts off the horizon. Above, there is only sky. ☐

A regular *Green Scene* contributor, Marby Sparkman interviewed Penelope Hobhouse for the February, 2001 issue. For more information on Fran Sorin, visit her website at www.fransorin.com

DARE to be



Left to right: Orienpet lily, foxtail lily, lion's ear, Culver's root.

Above: The Lily Garden; Right: Flora Graphics



Story by Debbie Moran

Tall plants and vines provide the gardener with many design possibilities. They can enliven a bland fence or wall, provide vertical interest, or add an element of drama or surprise. With all this potential, why choose the same boring plants found in every garden center—and garden—in the Mid-Atlantic region? This year, dare to be different. Choose from these new or little-known plants that are both beautiful and easy to grow. Here are five tall plants and five climbers guaranteed to help your garden rise above the ordinary.

Different!

10 Tall & Climbing Plants You Must Grow



Photos this page: Florographics

TALL PLANTS

FOXTAIL LILY (*EREMURUS* SP.) is not for the faint of heart. Stately candles of white, orange, yellow, and pastels range from 3 to 8 feet tall, often towering over the garden and the gardener. And each is covered with literally hundreds of florets. Brent Heath, co-owner of Brent and

Becky's Bulbs, says, "It's like a piece of living sculpture." Hardy in Zones 5 to 7, fox-tail lily grows best in full sun and very well-drained soil with a winter mulch. A sheltered location and some staking may also be required. Emerging rapidly from tentacle-like rhizomes, plants blossom in late May or early June. Many heirloom

selections are available, including the white-flowering species, *Eremurus himalaicus*.

The test-tube baby of the lily world, **ORIENTPET HYBRID LILY**, combines the beauty of Orientals with the heat tolerance and garden persistence of trumpet and Aurelian hybrids. Because the parent lilies

are genetically incompatible, Orienpers must be propagated by embryo rescue, a recent innovation in lily culture. The results, although a bit pricey, are worth it. Plants range from 4 to 6 feet tall with large, wide open, intensely colored flowers. One of the most popular, 'Silk Road', blooms from mid-July to early August with enormous, fragrant, white blossoms with crimson throats. Hardy in Zones 4 through 9, Orienpers thrive in full or part sun and moist, well-drained soil.

Listed alternately as **LION'S EAR** or **LION'S TAIL** (*LEONOTIS LEONURUS*),

this South African plant is unusual by any name. This member of the mint family will grow in our area as a tender perennial, and it is easy to cultivate and drought-tolerant, preferring well-drained soil and a sunny location (it also does well in containers). A shrubby, branching plant, lion's ear grows 6 or more feet tall in a single season. From mid-summer through fall, tiers of tubular, orange flowers radiate outward from thistle-like balls.

CULVER'S ROOT (*VERONICASTRUM VIRGINICUM*) is a northeastern native recently discovered by gardeners.

Growing 3 to 6 feet tall, it produces slender wands of flowers in mid- to late summer. In his book, *Armitage's Garden Perennials*, horticulture professor Allan Armitage notes, "There is some disagreement among eggheads as to whether the species is strictly lavender or both lavender and white...but white or lavender, I love this plant." Also look for the selection f. *album*, which has pure white blossoms, and 'Lavendelturm' with purple blossoms. Hardy in Zones 4 to 8, Culver's root appreciates moist, well-drained soil and

Pete Prown



Clockwise from top-left: Shining coneflower, Japanese hydrangea vine, climbing aster.

Larry Albee



Pamela Harper



DARE to be **Different!**

a sunny or partly-sunny site.

I purchased **SHINING CONEFLOWER** (*RUDBECKIA* SYN. 'HERBSTONNE' OR 'AUTUMN SUN') at an end-of-season plant sale. The huge coneflower was confined to a tiny, 3-inch pot. Of course, I felt sorry for it and brought it home. Luckily, it is carefree and attractive in the sunny garden. Hardy in Zones 4 through 9, shining coneflower grows 5 to 7 feet tall and blooms from mid-summer to autumn. Its large, daisy-like flowers have drooping yellow petals and prominent green centers. It performs best in a loca-

tion with full sun, good drainage, and protection from wind.

VINES

JAPANESE HYDRANGEA VINE (*SCHIZOPHRAGMA HYDRANGEOIDES* 'MOONLIGHT') was a 1998 Pennsylvania Horticultural Society Gold Medal Plant—and for good reason. Among its many attributes, its heart-shaped, blue-green leaves have an elegant silvery sheen. Clusters of creamy white, flat-topped flowers appear in June and last four to six weeks. In autumn, the

foliage turns golden yellow, and reddish brown stems provide winter interest. Hardy from Zones 5 to 9, this woody climber prefers a partly-shaded site with well-drained, fertile soil but will also tolerate sun. Reaching to 40 feet high via adhesive rootlets, Japanese hydrangea vine will happily decorate a wall or clamber up a large tree.

For a different twist, try **CLIMBING ASTER** (*ASTER CAROLINIANUS*). This easy and attractive native plant grows well in sun or light shade in average garden soil. Its narrow, gray-green foliage is

R. W. Thomas



Clockwise from top-left: Ornamental grape, downy clematis, climbing bleeding heart.



R. W. Thomas



Dency Kane/Garden Image

SOURCES

Brent and Becky's Bulbs

7463 Heath Trail
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(877) 661-2852
www.brentandbeckybulbs.com
[Foxtail lily]

Carolyn's Shade Gardens

Bryn Mawr, PA
(610) 525-4664
[Culver's root]

Carroll Gardens

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www.carrollgardens.com
[Climbing aster, downy clematis,
climbing bleeding heart]



Forest Farm

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www.forestfarm.com
[Japanese hydrangea vine,
ornamental grape]

J. Franklin Styer Nurseries

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Concordville, PA 19331
(610) 459-2400
www.styers.com
[Lion's ear, Culver's root,
shining coneflower, Japanese
hydrangea vine, ornamental
grape, downy clematis]



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www.we-du.com
[Culver's root, shining
coneflower, climbing aster]

somewhat unremarkable early in the season. But come September and October, expect abundant lavender flowers with bright yellow centers. Rather than clinging or twining, climbing aster's flexible stems weave through surrounding vegetation. Easy to train against a fence or trellis, it can reach 10 or more feet. Although hardy in Zones 6 through 9, it will appreciate a sheltered Zone 6 site.

Purple-leaved **ORNAMENTAL GRAPE** or **CLARET VINE** (*VITIS VINIFERA* 'PURPUREA') is grown primarily for its foliage. Its elegantly-cut leaves are wine red, becoming deep crimson in autumn. Hardy in Zones 6 through 9, it is vigorous and undemanding, capable of twining to 30 feet. Ornamental grape performs best in a sunny site, with well-drained, slightly acidic soil. For a dramatic look, pair it with gray-leaved companions or plant it against a pale background. At Longwood Gardens in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania, it is gracefully espaliered against a wall of the Visitor Center.

Are you a clematis lover with a shady site? Good news: **DOWNY CLEMATIS** (*CLEMATIS MACROPETALA*) thrives in a partly-shaded location, producing numerous bell-shaped, nodding blossoms in April and May. Carolyn Walker, owner of Carolyn's Shade Gardens in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, says, "When I first saw this clematis, I was bowled over by its color." Each flower appears double, with outer petals (sepals) of lavender blue and inner petals (staminodes) of bluish white. Hardy in Zones 4 to 9, downy clematis prefers moist, well-drained soil and will grow to 10 feet. Pink- and white-flowering varieties are also available.

Finally, **CLIMBING BLEEDING HEART** (*DICENTRA SCANDENS*) is another item for your "must grow" list. This rare and handsome Asian plant has delicate, fern-like foliage and clusters of lemon-yellow, heart-shaped flowers. For non-stop bloom from April through November, choose a site with moist, well-drained soil and afternoon shade. Hardy in Zones 6 through 8, climbing bleeding heart is vigorous but well-behaved, loosely twining to 10 or more feet. 

Debbie Moran writes and gardens (appropriately enough) in Gardiner, New York. Standing a lofty 4 feet, 11 inches in height, she considers every plant a tall plant. She offers thanks to Stephanie Cohen, Carolyn Walker, and Michael Petrie for their input in preparing this story.

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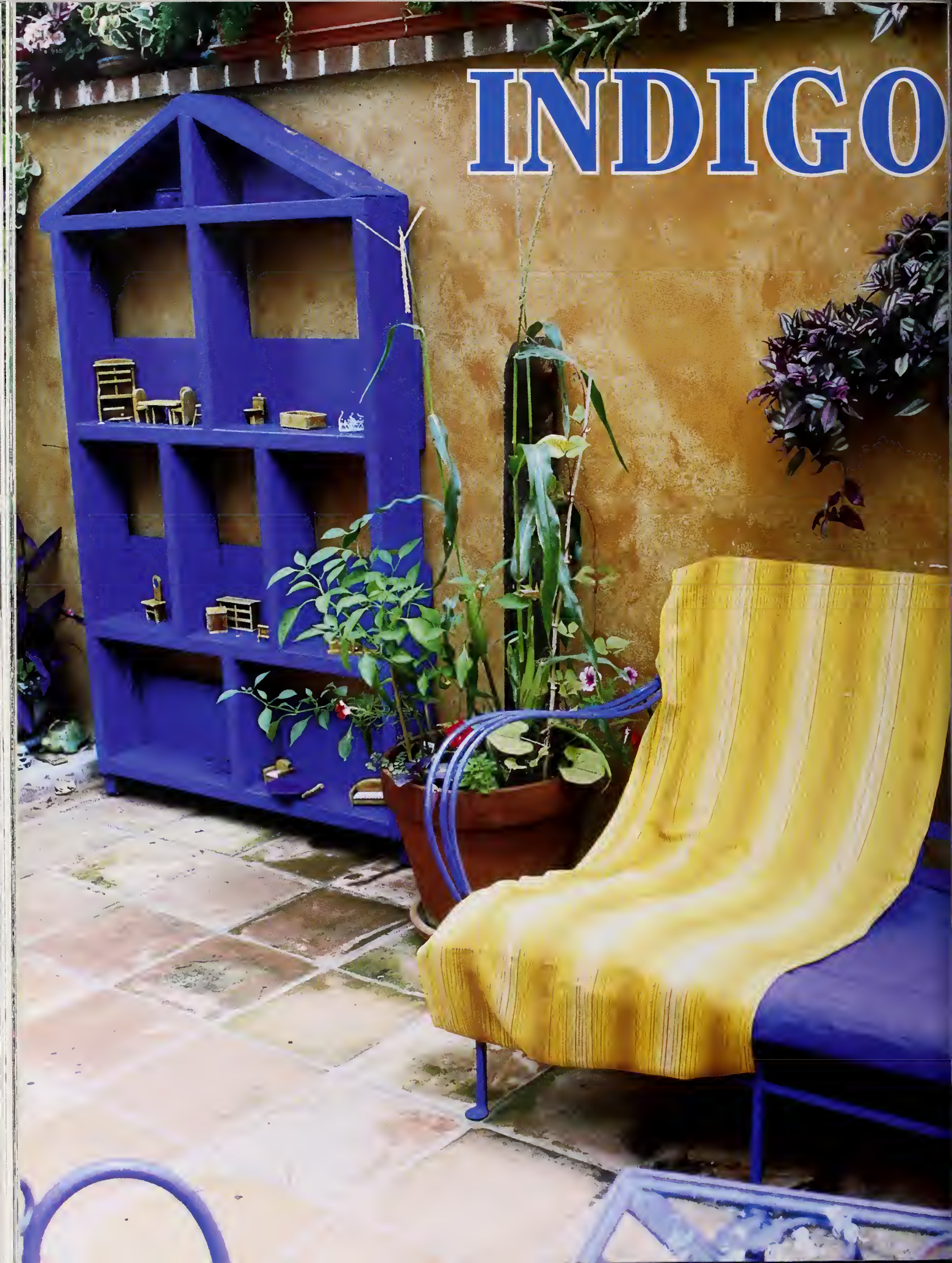
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INDIGO





DREAMS

A Visit to Iris Brown's Inspiring City Garden

*Story by John Gannon
Photos by John Gouker*

Iris Brown's garden sits tucked into a quiet niche of North Philadelphia's Norris Square neighborhood. A warm greeting at the front door, followed by a walk through Iris' lovely home, brings us through the kitchen and out to her walled backyard retreat. Instantly, I am taken somewhere else, seemingly far removed from the city's relentless energy. And on this lovely spring day, who could refuse the opportunity to take a look at such an intimate, magical place?



Above: An outdoor wall affords Iris the opportunity to display interesting objects that strengthen the “indigo” theme of her garden. **Right:** Iris and her granddaughter Ariel enjoy a moment outdoors.



Amazingly, Iris—who is responsible for helping run several community gardens in this largely Puerto Rican neighborhood—has found the time to also create, and re-create, her own personal sanctuary. “I used to change the theme every year,” she says. “Initially, it was primarily a vegetable garden, and then it developed into a space that included more flowers and a secluded sitting area.” Though the garden has continually evolved over the past decade, Iris has settled on a Southwestern motif...at least for the time being.

HEIGHT IN THE URBAN LANDSCAPE

Iris achieves height in her garden by taking advantage of its evocative walls. Originally a garish yellow color, she blended in brown tones to create a warm, golden stucco effect that’s more New Mexico than Philadelphia. Shelves and hanging “found objects” accent the vertical aspect of the space. “I get a rush from finding new objects for the garden,” says Iris, explaining how she likes to vary these items from year to year. “You should see my basement,” she laughs. “It’s filled with all sorts of things that have been in the garden or will be added this spring.”

Her talent for placing garden objects is offset by a lush indigo hue that you see everywhere. This shade of blue is Iris’ favorite color, and she uses it as a theme throughout her house and garden—such as on

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Residents, Diana Carroll and Dr. Willem Kolff, stroll through Dunwoody's beautifully, wooded campus.



Left: A once-empty corner explodes with color when containers are placed with a vertical emphasis

Above: The Brown family often dines in the garden during summer.

Top right: These hanging objects are decorated with symbols of Puerto Rico's indigenous Taino Indians.

the table, chairs, and in the subtle placements of small blue bottles and jars throughout. Her plants also complement the overall color scheme. Several climbing varieties harmonize with the contrasting colors of the walls and decorative objects, including wisteria, scarlet runner bean, rambling rose, and jas-

mine. And, in one of horticulture's happy accidents, Iris inherited a verdant grapevine that runs along the garden's back wall.

In a nod to her Puerto Rican roots, Iris's garden features many tropical plants, such as canna and hostas, in containers throughout her garden. Other

standouts include butterfly bush and bamboo, the latter of which acts as a screen for her compost pile. "I need to keep after the bamboo," she says of this fast growing, invasive plant. "If I don't, it will take over the garden!"

Despite her best efforts to create a place of beauty and tranquility, the real-



ities of urban blight lie close to this haven. The house behind Iris' backyard sits abandoned, deteriorating, and practically crumbling into the ground. She has been after the City to tear it down, but has thus far only met with frustration. And, while she's not a fan of the yellow-flowering tree of heaven (*Ailanthus* sp.) in her backyard, she admits that it does help obscure what lurks beyond. Still, she notes, "if that house is ever demolished, I'd like to be able to use the land to extend my garden."

A NEIGHBORHOOD IS NURTURED

Iris' passion for creating beautiful sanctuaries in the Norris Square community has been passed down through her family. Her daughter, Nitza, is responsible for many of the decorative stones and clay objects throughout the garden, which she has painted with symbols of Puerto Rico's indigenous Taino

Indians. And her granddaughter, Ariel, tends a plot in the neighborhood's largest community garden, Las Parcelas.

Las Parcelas, a high-profile example of the power of community gardening, has been a consistent winner in the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's City Gardens Contest. "Every year, we bring a group from Norris Square to the Contest's awards ceremony," Iris says. "It gives all of us an opportunity to see

beautiful gardens throughout the city, and to meet the people behind them."

When not tending her own garden, Iris works at the Norris Square Neighborhood Project, a community-based non-profit organization in North Philadelphia. Its initiatives include neighborhood revitalization through community gardens, collaborative murals, park maintenance, and tree plantings. The Project also focuses on drug prevention, literacy promotion, and other educational activities.

The Norris Square gardens are not only visually stunning, but also act as interactive teaching tools. They provide a forum for elders to share their Puerto Rican history and cultural traditions with Norris Square's youth. The gardens bear images of the island's flag, Taino Indians, and island folklore. "We want our children to be proud of who they are and of where they come from," Iris says.

BACKYARD SERENITY

Although the warm, tropical climate of her native island visits Philadelphia for only a few months each year, Iris takes full advantage of it, spending "all of her time" outside in the summer. "I just don't use the house when it's warm out," she says. "And I don't have a doorbell, so my friends need to tell me in advance when they plan to drop by."

"I'm always in the garden." ☺

John Gannon is head of research & documentation at PHS.

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A LOOK AT GROWING VERTICAL VEGETABLES

Story & Photography by Walter Chandoha

Many gardeners think they need a large, multi-acre spread to have a bountiful vegetable garden. But by growing plants *upward* instead of *outward*, you can still produce a mountain of veggies—even if your garden is a tiny, 6-foot square. Not all vegetables lend themselves to vertical growth, but many plants—tomatoes, peas, beans, cucumbers, melons, squashes, eggplant, peppers, and tomatillos, to name a few—all thrive with a little extra support, keeping your pantry full all summer. Not to mention your tummy.



Far left: Fava beans **Left:** King of the Garden lima beans soar skyward on wood supports. **Above:** Baskets filled with Roma, Sweet 100, and Early Girl tomatoes.

TYPES OF SUPPORT

The most useful vegetable supports are wire cages. It takes time to make them, but they last forever. Mine are 25 years old and still serviceable. They're made from a 5-foot length of sheep fencing rolled into a vertical cylinder, forming a cage about 18 inches in diameter. Using them is a snap. A tomato seedling is planted in a hole enriched with compost, the cage is placed over the plant, then soil is raked up over the bottom wires creating a "volcano," which traps rain. Five-foot cages are tall enough to support vigorously growing, indeterminate tomatoes—the true vines that grow to an unrestricted height. (I cut the vines when they grow

over the top of the cages, since by the time the plants reach the top, enough fruit has set to give me an abundance of tomatoes. Usually by this time the weather is getting cooler, and remaining flowers would not have enough time to develop into ripe fruit before the first frost.)

My homemade wire cages are more effective than the small "tomato cages" sold in garden centers. Sadly, too many neophyte gardeners are unaware of the vigorous growth of indeterminate tomatoes, but they quickly see the inadequacy of too-short cages when their plants spill over the tops. Yes, they'll support some of the determinates—tomatillos, peppers and eggplants—but they are much too short for indeterminate tomatoes. Some garden centers sell square wire cages that are 55 inches high, and from 18 to 24 inches square. These are somewhat better and can also be used to support pole beans.

Standing upright, my homemade cages are also perfect for the shorter sugar snap peas and for climbing cucumbers. Plant seeds, set the cages in place and let the climbers reach upward with their twirling, curling tendrils. For salsa fans, the cages are also perfect for supporting tomatillos. I also use the cages laid on the ground horizontally to support peppers, eggplant, bush and half runner beans, and determinate tomatoes like 'Patio' and 'Roma' (those that grow to a short, predetermined height).

POLES OF BAMBOO, LUMBER AND SAPLINGS

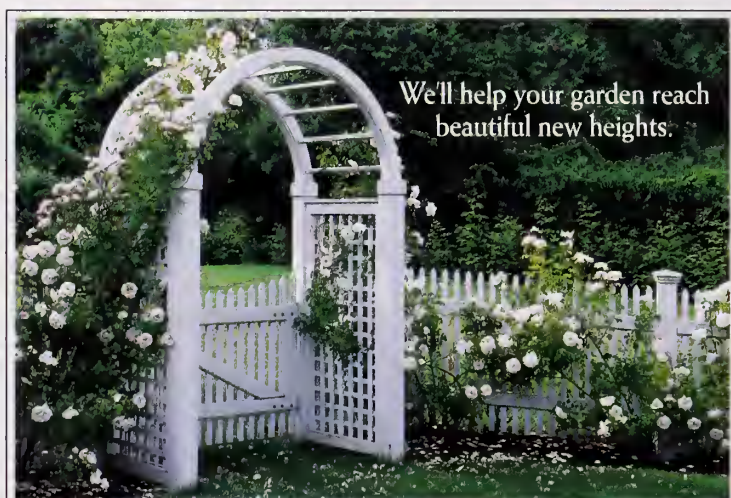
Some years ago, my friends Estelle and Avrum Katcher gave me several starts of bamboo, warning me of their invasive tendency. I planted the clumps in a sheltered, wet hollow alongside the pond. As expected, it did spread, but I did not see this as a problem, since I now had an unlimited sup-



Clockwise from left: Vegetables can grow anywhere you have space. For example, tie strings to a lamp post and grow pole beans.

Cage-grown 'Celebrity' tomatoes continue to produce until the frost.

Store-bought spiral stakes keep vines growing upward without tying.



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ply of poles to support my vegetables. Before I grew bamboo, I used saplings thinned out in the woods. Some gardeners use milled lumber stakes that are equally effective as supports, but milled lumber tends to rot faster than bamboo or green saplings.

Pole beans and poles are made for each other. Once the beans are planted around the poles, no further work is needed until picking time. The stems are self-supporting as they twirl up the poles.

Tomatoes are another story. The stems have to be tied to the poles to keep them growing upward, and extra stems that emerge from the leaf nodes should be pruned out. For something different, try metal plant spirals, a relatively new invention that looks like a gigantic corkscrew stuck in the ground. The 6-foot spirals guide a single tomato stem skyward, eliminating the need to tie the plants.

BEANS AND PEAS

Because they are so easy to grow, beans are probably the number-two vegetable in home gardens. They are divided into three broad categories: bush, runner or pole, and semi-runner. Bush beans, as the name implies, are compact plants that can be grown successfully without support. But even these, when heavily laden with mature beans, can become top heavy and flop over. So I grow big, fat 'Romas' and bush limas in wire cages laid horizontally on the soil.

Pole and runner beans climb upward with twining vines that wrap around the support—a pole of some sort,

twine, fencing, or wire. Given an equal amount of space, pole beans are heavy producers—out-yielding bush beans by a wide margin. If your appetite can't keep up with the harvest, let them dry on their supports and pick them in fall for winter storage.

Somewhere between pole and bush beans are the semi-runner beans. Most of these send out twining stems that grow up to 3 feet long, definitely requiring some type of support. Again, for these I use horizontal wire cages.

Fava beans, not often grown by home gardeners, are the only beans that can be planted in spring when the soil is still cold. In Zone 6 and above, you can also plant them in the fall for overwintering. Fava beans are upright growers reaching 36 inches high. The best way to support these is to encircle a double-row planting with two strands of baling twine 1 foot apart, tied to stakes at the four corners of the bed.

Peas have tiny, wiry tendrils that curl around supports as the plants climb upward. Conventional garden peas reach a maximum height of 2 to 3 feet and are perfect candidates for growing on brush. I use pruned-out branches of apple and peach trees. I stick them into the soil close together so that they overlap, then I plant peas thickly on either side of the brush row. As the peas grow, the tendrils on the stems curl around the branches and climb upward. Mature peas are highly visible and stay clean hanging on the branches.

Sugar snap peas need more than brush for support. The original sugar snap pea, an All-America winner in 1979, is still going strong. It quickly outgrows the typical 8-foot pole-and-twine support. I space poles 2 to 3 feet apart in a row and string baling twine horizontally 1 foot apart, tied around each pole. The snap pea tendrils curl around the twine reaching ever upward. Other snap pea introductions like 'Sugar Ann', 'Sugar Mel', 'Sugar Daddy', and 'Sugar Sprint' reach a maximum height of 3 to 4 feet, making them somewhat more manageable. These are the perfect size for growing in 18" wire cages.


OTHER SUPPORTABLE VEGGIES

Except for summer squashes and bush cucumbers, all of the cucurbits—such as cucumbers, melons, squash, and pumpkins—are roaming travelers. They grow on sprawling vines requiring lots of space, usually 3 to as much as 10 feet in any direction. But when grown vertically, they require only 1 to 2 square feet of ground space. The tiny

tendrils are strong enough to hold the climbing vines, along with cucumbers and tiny pumpkins, but are too fragile to hold up a heavy squash, pumpkin or melon. To hold the weight of these big vegetables, tie the maturing fruit in slings to their supports.

On the other hand, vegetables like peppers, eggplants and tomatillos are definitely not climbers, but when laden with ripening fruit, they can become top-heavy. I encircle these plants in a wire cage, so as the plants mature and fruits fatten, they'll have the support they need. The wire tomato cages sold in garden supply centers are tall and sturdy enough for this trio of vegetables.

HIGH AMBITIONS

At the end of the day, the little bit of elbow grease spent to support vegetables is well worth the effort. The plants need less space growing vertically and you will increase your garden's overall yield. Vertical growing also results in earlier harvesting, cleaner fruit, and a neater-looking garden. So give your vegetables some support. They'll pay you back all summer with a tasty bounty. 

Photographer Walt Chandoha is a longtime contributor to *Green Scene* and a member of the PHS Publications Committee.

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The PASSIONATE PERENNIALIST

BY BEVERLY FITTS

The Tallest Aster

Standing about 7-feet tall, the Tatarian aster is the Wilt Chamberlain of the aster world. It's definitely not for the timid. You could play it safe and plant it at the back of a border, or in the center of a bed, but if you want to win big, naturalize it and fully enjoy the skyscraping height of this easy-to-grow perennial.

"*Aster tataricus* is fabulous in mass," says Joe Henderson, the gardener in charge of the pond area at Chanticleer in Wayne, PA. Four years ago, Joe planted 200 of these asters on 10-inch centers. He wanted them to fill in quickly, and they did. Now they look like they've been there for generations.

I first saw the planting in early October as I came down the path from Chanticleer's kitchen garden. The pond was cloaked in early morning mist, and thousands of small daisy-like flowers veiled the pump house in a lavender-blue haze. The scene was so powerful it will always be my standard for using this statuesque perennial.

In spring, the Tatarian aster has large mounds of spinach-like basal foliage, with leaves up to 2 feet long and 6 inches wide. Later, the foliage climbing up the flower stalks gets smaller as the stems stretch toward the sky. In spite of its height the plant stands erect and doesn't need staking, which is a big plus in my book.

This aster from Siberia, China, and Japan is obviously happy at Chanticleer. It grows straight and proud in the full

sun around the pump house, slumping only slightly in part shade farther down the pond. Around the pump house, Joe had added lots of compost before he planted—making the soil loose and friable. In other spots it grows equally well

Horticulturists Rick Darke and Skip March noticed this shorter form at the Jindai Metropolitan Park in Tokyo. Intrigued, Rick inquired about it and was given a piece to test at Longwood Gardens. He found this form has a consistently smaller size and good color: "It's still rhizomatous, but it doesn't spread as fast as the species and doesn't seed in."

Both the species and the cultivar make excellent cut flowers with good autumn foliage. Chinese herbalists use the Tatarian aster as a warming expectorant in the treatment of colds, and the American Horticultural Society lists it as one of the 75 great plants for American gardens.

The Tatarian aster looks good playing with other roughnecks such as golden-

rod (*Solidago* sp.), hardy ageratum (*Eupatorium coelestinum*) and fountain grass (*Pennisetum alopecuroides*). But for me, it wins big when massed alone against the coral tones of the setting autumn sun. ☐

photo by Beverly Fitts, shot at Chanticleer



in unamended moist clay. This towering plant is really quite adaptable.

The Tatarian aster is rhizomatous and eventually forms large colonies. However, the plant is easy to divide in spring and is nice to share with friends. "It seeds around a bit, too," says Joe, "but not as much as some of the other asters we have at Chanticleer." Although this perennial is easy to grow, powdery mildew, rust and Japanese beetles occasionally cause problems. Henderson says, "A fungus blackened some of the foliage here this past summer, but the plant is usually trouble free."

If the species is too big for you, try the 5-foot cultivar 'Jindai' that Joe uses around the pump house door.

SOURCES:

Waterloo Gardens in Exton
[for the species]
(610) 363-0800

Russell Gardens, Richboro, PA
[for the cultivar 'Jindai']
(215) 322-4799

Beverly Fitts is a busy garden lecturer, photographer, and former president of the Hardy Plant Society/Mid-Atlantic Group.



BY ADAM LEVINE

Tools for Reaching High Places

Getting a garden off the ground is intimidating to many of us. Simply maintaining plants that grow close to earth can be overwhelming, let alone trying to figure out how to tend, trim, and train them as they climb toward the sky. But as has been amply explained elsewhere in this issue, height is one of the design elements that help make any garden more dynamic. A garden without vertical features is about as exciting as soda without fizz. Both leave me flat.

Long-handled tools allow us to do maintenance work many feet above our heads while still standing on terra firma, a far more safe and solid proposition (barring the occasional earthquake) than even the most secure ladder. Pole pruners and pole saws (often both are mounted on the same pole) have long handles that, on some models, telescope from about 5 to more than 12 feet long. These tools are especially useful for tree work, though it takes practice to learn how to maneuver the pruning blades or saw into the right position on the branch, especially when the handle is fully extended. It is also a challenge to follow principles of proper pruning when the cut is made up to a dozen feet overhead (and may even be out of sight).

Most pole pruners have a rope that hangs along the side of the pole. In theory, pulling the rope closes the blades and makes the cut, but if the rope snags or gets tangled in twiggy growth, trying to get the blades to close can become an exercise in frustration. A new "ropeless" pole pruner from Fiskars solves this problem with a mechanism that runs inside the pole, with the pruner operated by pulling on a sliding section of the

handle. This model also has a swiveling head, which allows you to adjust the angle of the blade to make cleaner, closer cuts without leaving unsightly stubs.

Pole pruners will cut branches up to 1 to 1-1/2 inches thick, depending on the model. For anything larger, try the pole saw. A sharp cutting edge, crucial to making clean cuts with a minimum of effort, is important for any pruning tool,

Pete Prown



but especially so for a pole saw, since the longer the handle, the less pressure we can exert in the sawing motion.

Other long-handled cutting tools include pruners, hedge shears and loppers. These can be useful when trimming back or shaping up vines and shrubs that are either out of reach, or in the back of a bed where we don't want to tread.

Finally, at the risk of sounding like a nagging parent, I need to say something about one of the most basic—and most misused—"reach-extending" tools, the ladder. Falls from ladders cause tens of thousands of serious injuries each year

and even deaths.

Before climbing on any ladder, make sure it's in good repair, be it wooden or aluminum. A ladder is also only as secure as the ground it sits on. Make sure that the feet are level and securely kicked into the ground, so they won't shift when you start to climb. Never stand on the top of a step ladder or even the top two steps, and never on the paint shelf.

Use both hands while climbing any ladder. If you need tools, carry them in a tool belt or pull them up with a bucket and rope once you're at the top.

Finally, though it takes a little more time and effort, move the ladder to the work instead of over-reaching, which is the cause of many accidents. Otherwise you may re-enact this familiar scenario: Gardener pruning a hedge, leaning way off to one side of the ladder, waving the electric hedge trimmer at that elusive bit of shaggy privet while muttering, "If I can only reach a little bit farther...there, almost got it....WHOA! [crash bang] \$%&!"

SOURCES:

Many local garden centers carry various makes of long-handled pruning tools. Other sources include:

- Fiskars: (800) 500-4849
www.fiskars.com
- Fruit Growers Equipment:
(800) 707-5274
- Yard Shark: (800) 777-5538
www.sharkcorp.com

For more information on ladder safety, see the National Agricultural Safety Database website (www.cdc.gov/niosh/nasd/nasdhome.html).

A frequent *Green Scene* contributor, Adam Levine also writes for *Garden Design* and *This Old House*, among other magazines.



UNCOMMON GROUNDCOVERS

BY PATRICIA A. TAYLOR

Soaring with Salal

Finding a groundcover appropriate for an issue on adding height to the garden was not easy. After all, groundcovers by their very nature are supposed to be low-growing plants that cover bare patches of earth. After much research, however, I discovered one that fits the bill: salal (*Gaultheria shallon*). Though it can top out at 10 feet (now that's adding height), salal is still described in various horticultural literature as a groundcover.

While this shrub is not well known, its dark green, oval 2-inch-long leaves are frequently used as filler in florist's arrangements. I look forward to cutting some for my holiday decorations in another year or two. (The waiting period is necessary because I just put salal in my garden last September.) While I can't recommend this plant based on extensive personal experience, I am still excited about its possibilities.

Salal is a West coast native, decorating landscapes from Alaska to California (Zones 5b-8). It bears numerous clusters of pale pink, urn-shaped flowers in June and early July on the East coast, and from March into June out west. These blossoms become bunches of beautiful, edible purple fruit in August, that is, if you don't cut them for arrangements or if birds are not nimble enough. The foliage is evergreen, while newer stalks are flushed with pinkish-red tones—I enjoyed watching them emerge from melting snow blankets this past winter.

Salal is exceptionally adaptable. It can be grown in full sun to full shade. In the exposed situation of the former, it will

only grow 1 to 2 feet tall, but the shadier the growing conditions, the taller it will get (ranging from 4 to 10 feet). This versatile plant will thrive on the shore and in the mountains, too. The U.S. Forest Service recommends planting it as an aid in stabilizing coastal dunes and in pro-

ered with the lovely flowers and rich green leaves was extremely welcoming. He wrote, "So pleased was I, that I could scarce see anything but it."

He soon sent seeds to England, where they quickly germinated. The British loved salal as a woodland carpet that could be used to hedge game reserves. In 1975, Will Ingwersen, a distinguished British horticulturist, included it in his book, *Classic Garden Plants*, and Donald Wyman recommended it as an ornamental groundcover in the 1977 edition of his encyclopedia. And then, depending on location, salal either took over or dropped out. In England, growing conditions encouraged its aggressive nature and, in 1993, it was officially dubbed a weed in northeast regions. Back in its home country, salal has pretty much disappeared from garden literature outside its native haunts.

Given that salal is not invasive in our country and sports both an exceptionally carefree nature and year-long beauty, I think it's time to reconsider this rare wonder. My plants are placed in a shady area where little else grows. If nothing else, they will "heighten" my interest in unusual groundcovers. And hopefully now, yours too. 🌿



Joanne Pavia

tecting vulnerable watersheds. It will grow in shallow rocky soils and in moist peat areas. It never needs to be pruned, but can be easily cut back in April should you prefer a shorter profile to complement your spring blooms.

Plant explorer David Douglas knew nothing about these characteristics when he first saw salal upon landing at Cape Disappointment on the Oregon-Washington border in April 1825. He had been traveling for over eight months, and the sight of hillsides cov-

SOURCES:

Two mail-order sources can be found at www.forestfarm.com (phone 541-846-7269) and www.weirddudesplantzoo.com (phone 540-886-6364).

Many other little known groundcovers are described in Taylor's book on *Easy Care Native Plants* (Holt).

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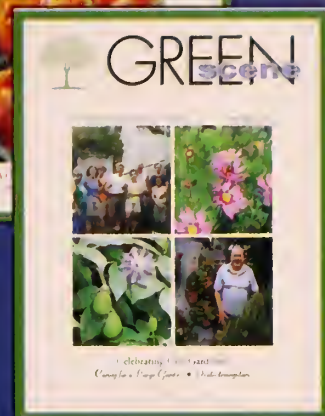
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A Weekend Pergola Project

If you have the will and imagination to build a garden pergola (and perhaps a few willing friends or family members to help out), you can construct one in a weekend or so. It's not as difficult as it seems: a basic pergola can be constructed out of pressure-treated wood, hardware, and galvanized nails readily available at your local home center.

For this project in Delaware County, the homeowner wanted an "attached" pergola to cover the walkway to his back door (versus a freestanding one erected over a garden path). The plan was simple: seven 4 x 4-inch posts were sunk in the ground at 4-foot intervals and secured with instant, mix-less concrete—just add water and it will set in a few minutes. [See photo 1.]

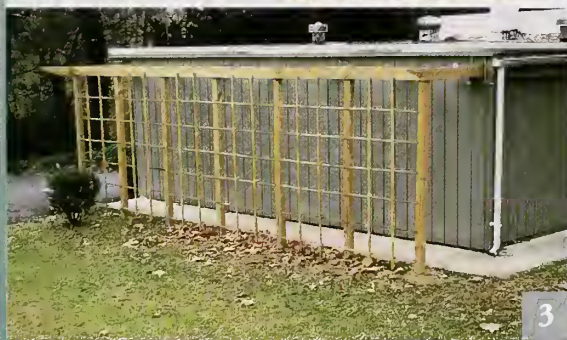
The key here was to: A) measure the spaces between the posts accurately, and B) dig the holes exactly 2 feet deep, so that all the 10-foot posts were nearly the same height once set (note: once in their holes, the posts stood 8 feet off the ground). Also, a level was used during the setting process to make sure all the posts were perfectly vertical. With all the posts set, 4 x 4 crossbeams were attached between the post tops and the house using standardized 4 x 4 brackets made of rust-proof galvanized steel. [See photo 2.]

At this point, the basic construction of the pergola was complete. The next step was to add decorative elements. Several 1 x 6-inch planks were nailed along the top of the pergola to create a trim layer, hiding the metal brackets as well as any minor irregularities in post height. On the trim pieces at each end, a jigsaw was used to cut a decorative curve evoking a Japanese mood.

With the trim complete, the final step was to use halved bamboo poles to create the lattice upon which climbing plants would be grown. These were cut to extend across three posts and nailed into place (note: pre-drill the nail holes as bamboo has a tendency to split otherwise). The poles were then tied together with brown twine at each cross point to create more of a Zen effect. [See photo 3.] And *voilà!*—the pergola was finished in just two days.

The next weekend was spent digging a narrow garden bed along the pergola's edge (to separate it from the lawn), and then planting clematis, roses, nasturtiums, scarlet runner beans, and more. [See photo 4.] You see, this pergola project wasn't as hard to build as you imagined. Now it's your turn. 🌱

—Pete Prown



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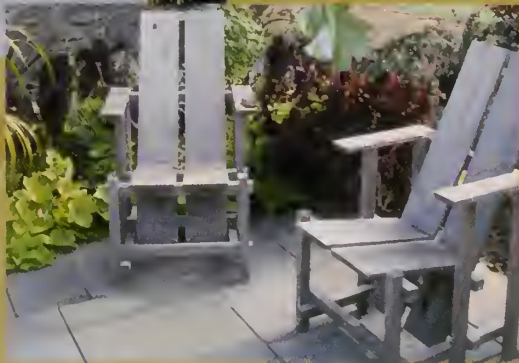
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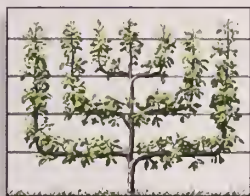
FEATURES

10 In an Italian Garden

While driving around a small Main Line neighborhood, Olivia Lehman stumbled across the verdant gardens of Ben and Grace Durbano. Originally from Italy, the Durbanos have created plantings reminiscent of their homeland, replete with grapes, figs, bright flowers, and tomatoes galore. Come enjoy a taste of Italy in this special garden spot.

18 Garden Rooms

Gardener Marcia Spoor wanted to make an intimate garden space that would be enjoyable for her family. To achieve this, she designed garden rooms that evoke a sense of depth and scale, as well as provide a terrific spot for her kids to play hide 'n' seek. Join Beverly Fitts as she guides us through Marcia's joyous creation. All our gardens should be so playful.



24 Revisiting the Espalier

For many years, the espalier has been considered passé, a relic from the era of stiff, formal gardens. Wilbur Zimmerman, however, suggests we revisit this artful style of tree planting and pruning, and rightly so, as its time-

less elegance and precise form provide an interesting contrast to today's free-form gardening styles.

30 Great Gardeners at the Philadelphia Harvest Show!

Each September, many of the region's finest gardeners bring their plants to be judged at the Philadelphia Harvest Show. In this story, we're introduced to two groups of Harvest Show competitors, one a community garden in Philadelphia and the other an avid gardening couple from the suburbs. For each, however, the Harvest Show is a high-point of their gardening season.

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Cover Photo by Beverly Fitts

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Closed Sunday

(Open Sundays Sept. 9th thru Oct. 28th)



There is no greater joy for the August gardener than pulling a ripe tomato off a vine heavy with fruit. During that torrid month (traditionally a depressing one for ornamental gardeners, whose flowers seemingly wither by the second), vegetable gardening assumes a kingly place in the horticultural world. It is the time for picking and cooking and canning all the produce that was mere seed just three or four months earlier. More than that, it creates a deeper connection between the gardener and the earth—more than simply satisfaction for the eyes and soul, vegetable gardening provides genuine sustenance as well.

Another beauty of vegetable gardening is that it can be accomplished on as grand or as diminutive a scale as you'd like. If you

For The Love Of Zucchini

have the time and energy, a large kitchen garden can yield a tremendous amount of edibles. Each summer, I drive by a 40 x 40 foot plot near suburban Media, PA that is meticulously plowed in spring and, by August, covered by rows of corn and other edibles. Clearly, this is the home of serious vegetable gardeners. My neighbor Chris, meanwhile, is content with a few tomatoes, peppers, and herbs in a small bed by his garage. "Tomatoes and basil," he muses. "What more do you really need?"

The answer, of course, is *not much*. And for the truly small veggie garden, look no further than your nearest terracotta pot. Yes, you can grow vegetables successfully in pots. (For more on growing vegetables in pots, read Sydney Eddison's fascinating article,

"Harvest from a Tub," in the July 1999 issue, as well as Jane Pepper's story on container-grown eggplant in the May 1999 issue.)

The less heartwarming part of this story is that fewer Americans are growing vegetables each year. There is no measurable reason why, but one might suspect our growing reliance on household electronics as a possible culprit. Instead of being outdoors and enjoying the harvest, many of us remain glued to our computer screens or DVD players. Fortunately, "virtual gardening" has not become a popular reality, at least not yet.

There is also the myth that vegetable gardening is too labor intensive. In truth, you can make it as much or as little work as you want. There are those who are out in their gardens nightly weeding, watering, and handpicking potato beetles off their crops, partially because it's good maintenance, but also because, deep down, they really enjoy the process.

On the other hand, there have been summers when I haven't been able to get outside as much as I've wanted, but still been rewarded with bumper crops of cucumbers, tomatoes, and especially zucchini. (As all dirt-gardeners know, there are three things in life that are inevitable: death, taxes, and boatloads of zucchini in August.)

Indeed, there are plenty of plants that grow with little or no supervision. Witness the case of the missing pumpkin seeds. Last year, I dropped a few pumpkin seeds in the back of the garden and promptly forgot about them. Then in October, I was delighted to find a perfect pumpkin growing under a spirea *outside* my garden fence, while another hung happily from a nearby apple tree. Lesson learned: Never turn your back on a pumpkin vine...not even for a second!

Of course, if you want to share the fun of vegetable gardening with others, consider joining a community garden, or even starting one with your neighbors. Not only will you have the opportunity to share ideas and produce, but also to make friends and "plant roots" in your town. In the city, Philadelphia Green has supported many neighborhood gardens since 1974, while in the suburbs, there are thriving community plots from Swarthmore to Phoenixville and beyond. To gather more information on how to start a community garden or locate an existing one near you, visit the American Community Garden Association

website at www.communitygarden.org or call (215) 988-8862 to request written materials.

So whether you go it alone or with a large, friendly group, a simple vegetable garden is one of the most rewarding pleasures in all of horticulture. Especially if you like zucchini. 🍷

Pete Brown
greenscene@pennhort.org



Saving Tomato Seeds

Story and photography by Rob Cardillo

What makes your tomatoes so special? Do they ripen earlier, produce a heavier yield, or taste so exceptionally divine that you can't bear the thought of slicing any other for your summer salads? Or do they carry an ancestral legacy that needs to be preserved and passed on for other generations to enjoy? Whatever makes them winners, here's the best way I've found to preserve the seeds from your favorite heirloom, open-pollinated or non-hybrid tomatoes.

By saving seeds every year you'll always be assured of good germination rates. And by choosing specific plants with the best fruits that seem to thrive a little better in your own backyard, you're getting the added bonus of creating a strain that's better adapted to your sun, soil, and taste buds. One caveat: Don't try this trick with hybrid varieties—you'll end up with seeds that won't grow true.

Except for cherry and potato-leafed types, most tomato plants will self-pollinate. Still, it's probably best to keep your favorite variety at least 10 feet from the rest of the crops in the garden so there's little chance of cross-fertilization. (If you're really concerned, you can cover several unopened flowers with a bit of spun row-cover material and wait until the petals drop before removing. Tie a ribbon around that flower cluster so that you can identify the fruits that follow.)

After you've selected your perfect plant, harvest a few of the best looking fruits when they're a little overripe and follow these easy directions:

Step 1

Cut the selected fruits in half and squeeze or scoop out the seedy pulp into a jar. You can make a sauce or salsa from the rest of the fruit. If you're saving cherry tomatoes, save some time by throwing them in a blender or food processor.

Step 2

Add approximately the same amount of water as pulp and stir. Set the uncovered jar in a warmish (70-80°F) out-of-the-way, shady place like a garage or porch two to four days until it begins to ferment and form a whitish-gray moldy crust. You'll recognize the pungent odor of rotting tomatoes as the jar begins to brew.

Scoop off and discard the crust. This rotting process breaks down the little gelatinous sacks around the seeds that inhibit germination. Fermentation also destroys many seed-borne diseases.

Step 3

Stir vigorously and then let settle. The heavier viable seeds will sink to the bottom while the undeveloped seeds will float

Step 4

Strain the seeds. Pour off the liquid along with any leftover floating mold and debris. Add more water, stir, let settle and pour off again. Repeat until you can strain just the viable seeds from the bottom.

Step 5

Spread the seeds on a small plate or other smooth surface and allow to air dry. Stir them about with your hand every now and then to ensure even drying. Once they're completely dry, pack them away in little film containers or envelopes, label carefully, and be on your way to another perfect crop of tomatoes next year. ☑



Rob Cardillo is a Delaware Valley photographer and writer specializing in horticulture.

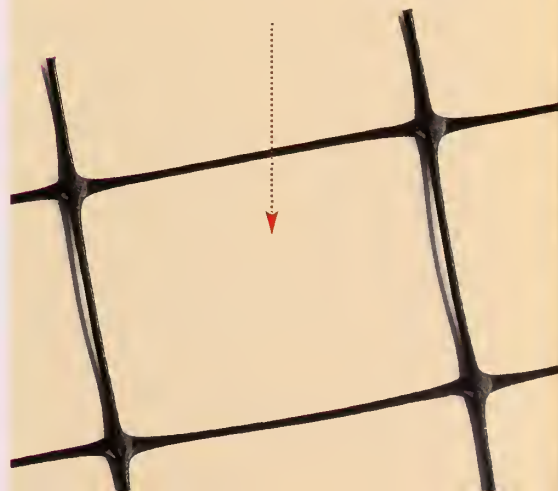
GARDEN NET



A PLEA FOR POLLINATORS.

More than 90% of earth's flowering plants—including many food crops—depend on insects or animals to transfer pollen from one flower to another. But all over the world, **wild pollinators** are threatened by habitat loss and pesticide use, while a parasitic mite has reduced domestic honeybee populations by about 25%. Backyard gardeners can help by growing nectar- and pollen-rich flowers (like coreopsis, cosmos, lupine, and sunflowers), avoiding pesticides, and providing nesting habitat. The Gardener's Supply Company (802-660-3500, www.gardeners.com) offers information, tips, products and resources for attracting pollinators to home gardens.

PLEASE CLOSE THE GATE, DEER. Keeping deer from munching prized plants has become an increasingly difficult challenge for many gardeners. For over 10 years, Benner's Gardens in New Hope, PA has been selling "virtually invisible" mesh fencing designed to keep deer out of enclosed areas. But unless a property is fully fenced, deer will find their way in



through driveways and other openings, happily feasting on your garden shrubs until they find their way back out. So Benner's recently introduced a new deer-fighting gizmo: the motion-activated **"Deer Shield" driveway system**. When the "Deer Shield" senses the presence of deer, an aluminum-frame barrier is deployed across the driveway, keeping your plants from becoming late-night critter snacks. For more information, contact Benner's Gardens at (800) 753-4660 or www.deershield.com

BULB SEASON. Like it or not, August signals the beginning of the end of summer, so it's not too soon to **order bulbs for fall planting**. The Netherlands Flower Bulb Information Center recommends planting bulbs as soon as the soil is cool and at least six weeks before the ground freezes. Early autumn is also a great time to plant perennials. You'll give them time to establish roots so they're ready to shoot up when spring returns. This year, try some interesting bulb-perennial combinations, like pink *Narcissus* 'Passionale' with dark-leafed *Huechera* 'Purple Palace'. More advice about planting bulbs can be found at www.bulb.com

PLANTS OF YORE. Why not cultivate a bit of history in your garden? The **Twinleaf Catalogue**, published by the **Thomas Jefferson Center for Historic Plants**, sells many varieties of perennials, bulbs, and vegetables grown by Jefferson at Monticello. For fall planting, Twinleaf offers several unusual bulbs, such as cloth-of-gold crocus (*Crocus angustifolius*), sword flag gladiolus (*Gladiolus communis* ssp. *byzantinus*), and tassel and feather hyacinths (*Muscari comosum* and

Hoppy Holidays

When a family of seven rabbits took up residence on a busy Villanova roadside, they were an immediate hit. A family of *wooden* rabbits, that is. A massive, dead oak stood on the property of John C. and Chara Haas, but instead of cutting it down, they hired sculptor Marty Long to transform it into an engaging family of rabbits. But the bunnies were hardly the final product. They were only the first act in what would become an ongoing artistic performance.

Throughout the year, the Haas' decorate their rabbit sculpture with whimsical, but well-chosen ornaments. Holidays like Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter, July 4th,

St. Patrick's Day, Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, Father's Day, and Flag Day have all become occasions to festoon the rabbit family in some new décor. The homeowners report that fan mail pours in, some from as far away as Charleston, South Carolina, attesting to the popularity of the furry family.

But why rabbits? Rabbits were chosen because Mrs. Haas collects rabbits, and her brood's surname means "hare" in German. And why seven? Both the Haas family and the sculpted rabbit couple have five offspring. It's a delightful case of art imitating life. 🐰

—Gayle B. Samuels

Gayle Samuels



Right: A shot of the sculpture on County Line Road in Villanova, Pa.

Above: The rabbits dressed up for St. Patrick's day.



Pete Prown

The Gardener's Bookshelf

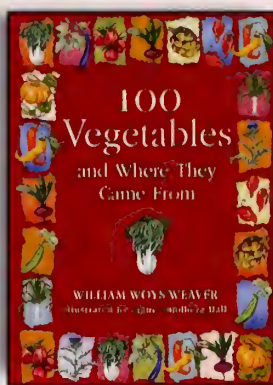
100 Vegetables and Where They Came From

by William Woys Weaver (Algonquin, 300 pp., hardcover, \$18.95)

Level: Intermediate/Advanced.

Pros: Needn't be read all at once.

Cons: Makes one pine for an unreasonably large vegetable garden.



This is a great little book filled with accounts of mouth-watering vegetables most of us have never even heard of. The author—a food historian, heirloom seed saver, and gourmet cook—takes us on a journey around the world, and then gently pushes us into our own kitchen. Each alphabetically arranged entry tells the story of a different prized vegetable, not only where it comes from, but its ancestry, appearance, flavor, and how best to use it in a recipe. Each also includes a charming drawing by Signe Sundberg-Hall.

The range of vegetables is large, from cabbage to cardoon, with legumes leading the list (indeed, he includes 16 varieties of beans). Some vegetables are exotic, like the Honduran Frijoles Rojas de Seda, a red bean in a pink pod that makes a lively show in the garden, as well as on one's dinner plate. Some selections have been grown since ancient times, like the violet carrot from Syria.

It's not just the history, it's the details of people and places, colors and flavors that makes *100 Vegetables and Where They Came From* a top candidate for the bedside shelf. Nightly doses recommended. —Nancy Q. O'Donnell

The Language of Flowers: Symbols and Myths

by Marina Heilmeyer, with Susanne Weiss (Prestel, 96 pp., hardcover, \$25)

Level: All levels.

Pros: An excellent gift for gardeners and art lovers.

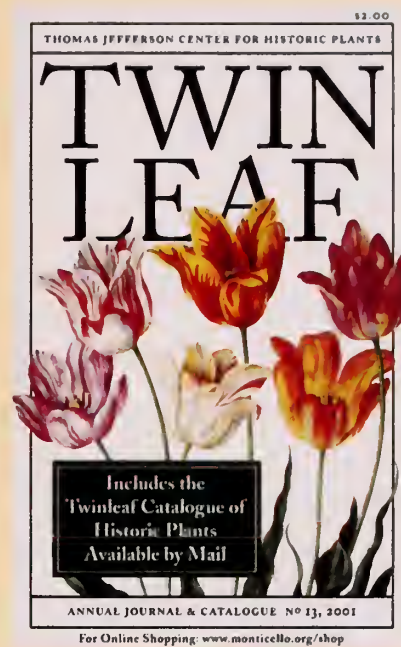
Cons: None.



"A rose is a rose is a rose," wrote Gertrude Stein. But is it? Few other flowers have been so burdened with symbolic meaning as the rose, which today is most often associated with romantic love. But did you know that, according to Jewish legend, the color of the rose comes from the first blood spilled on earth, making it a symbol of death? And to early Christians, the rose represented Roman decadence before it came to signify the virtues of the Virgin Mary.

In this fascinating book, German botanist and art historian Marina Heilmeyer traces the evolving symbolism of flowers in various cultures over the centuries. In ancient Greece, for example, flowers were linked with mythological figures and stories that attempted to explain the cycles of life. The Greeks also recorded early descriptions of the plant world and are responsible for many flower names. "Anemone," Heilmeyer explains, comes from *anemos*, the Greek word for wind "because its delicate flowers appear to open in a gentle spring breeze and because its blossom is so short lived, like a breath of wind." For these reasons, the anemone became a symbol of life's transience.

Beautifully illustrated with details of Old Master paintings, the book includes an engaging introduction followed by a look at the symbolism of some of our favorite garden flowers, from hellebore to hyacinth to rosemary. *The Language of Flowers* will appeal not only to gardeners, but to art lovers as well. —Jane Carroll



M. comosum 'Plumosum')—indeed, these hyacinths have been growing at Monticello since the 18th century. The catalog also makes for enjoyable reading, with fascinating tidbits of American gardening history and lovely illustrations. To request a copy, call (804) 984-9821 or visit www.monticello.org/shop

TREE OF THE YEAR. The Garden Club of America has selected the **striped** or **moosewood maple** (*Acer pensylvanicum*) as the winner of their annual Freeman Horticultural Medal. This maple is a small-to-medium understory tree with bright green leaves that turn to soft yellow in fall. It also has a distinctive bark that is pale green with whitish vertical fissures that resemble a snake's skin.

SPECIAL AWARD. Kudos to *Green Scene* columnist Patricia A. Taylor, who was awarded a prestigious Quill & Trowel award from the Garden Writers Association of America. This was for her October 2000 "Uncommon Groundcovers" column on *Waldsteinia fragarioides*. Congratulations, Patricia!

—Jane Carroll





Olivia Lehman



PASSPORT TO ITALY

An Abruzzo Garden thrives on the Main Line

Story by Olivia Lehman • Garden photography by Pete Prown

I read in a newspaper once that while English gardens are the most beautiful, Italian gardens are the most fun. This proclamation has stayed with me over the years, gaining particular weight one season when I became spellbound by the craft of two Italian-born gardeners. That summer my own front yard said mostly “beautiful,” with a thyme-strewn path leading to blue flax and gypsophila, miniature roses and columbine. Plenty of color and grace...but fun? Not really. What I learned from looking at Italian-American plantings is that a garden with some food in it, or at least some growing nearby, is enlivened by a promise of fine cooking and fraternity. If eating and conversation don’t equal fun, what does?



Top: A fig tree sits in the side yard with a ladder at the ready for harvesting anytime.

Right: A close-up of ripe figs ready for eating.

Opposite page: Ben's grapevines soak up the sun on a bright summer's day in Ardmore.



PASSPORT TO ITALY

My education in Italian-American gardening began one August day when I got lost in Ardmore, a Main Line suburb just west of Philadelphia. I was driving around looking for some 20-foot sunflowers I'd seen the summer before, when I happened upon a cottage with good sized gardens—all of them robust and unmistakably Italian.

Now, many of us can grow a fruit tree, some basil, peppers, a border of sizzingly colored cannas, but it is the Italian gardeners who grow them all in abundance, and in the noble symmetries that declare a link to the ancients. Theirs are gardens of late summer. While neighbors' plots of perennials enjoy a pastel glory from April through June, the Italian-inspired garden seems a wallflower by contrast, with not much showiness at all save a simple flowering of red roses and geraniums. But wait, August tells another story, one of startling color and fecundity: dahlias, spanish violets, cannas, mexican sunflowers, crape myrtle trees, hibiscus, rosemary, bay leaf, grapevines, white and purple figs, peaches, pears, and row after row of vegetables.

Berardino ("Ben") and Grace Durbano own the South Ardmore gardens pictured on these pages. The couple is from Italy's rugged Abruzzo region, located at the center of the country's east coast along the Adriatic sea. Their town, Palombaro, is in the valley of Maiella, the so-called "mother mountain" of the area. Ben and Grace were both raised on small farms that produced olives, wheat, corn, potatoes and grapes. The families milled grain and made cheeses from their own goats' and cows' milk. Gourmands praise the Abruzzi for such native cheeses—pecorino and ricotta among them. The herbs saffron and wormwood (the base for absinthe) are other signature offerings from this mountainous province.





Above: Surrounding the house is a hot-colored border filled with cannas, marigolds, pelargoniums, dahlias, and crape myrtles.



Olivia Lehman

Few people could make a decent living in Abruzzo after World War II, since warfare damaged many of the region's olive trees, a vital cash crop. Ben and Grace came to the United States in 1956, settling along with other Italian immigrants on the Main Line. Some worked as gardeners on local estates and golf courses. Ben worked for the Red Arrow Company (now SEPTA) fixing tracks. In 1963 the Durbanos laid the groundwork for the veritable farm that sits across the street from their white cottage. The 2,500-square-foot lot yielded 25 cords of wood before they brought in cow manure by the truckload to prepare the garden.

Ben still favors cow manure over horse manure and uses it to amend his soil every other year. An additional 100-200 lbs. of lime is added annually. Notes Ben, "I don't use any chemicals. In the spring I add the lime and a little fertilizer, but that's all. I don't like eating food with chemicals on it. And the soil is very good. See that giant tomato vine over there? I didn't plant that—it just came up by itself this year. That happens a lot here."

Because their fruit and vegetable crops are so vigorous, Ben and Grace eat home-grown produce all year round. The giant fig tree by their house is especially magnificent. Ben keeps a ladder next to it all sum-

Planting a Grapevine

If the taste of Italian-American gardening appeals to you, why not consider planting a grapevine—perhaps the signature element of the Italian garden. Here's how to get vines started:



- 1.** In the Delaware Valley, Concord grapes fare best. Plant in coarse soil during early spring, spacing vines 6 to 8 ft. apart.
- 2.** It is essential to establish vines in full sun, and in an area with good air circulation, because humidity promotes rot and mildew.
- 3.** When planting, dig your hole a foot deeper than the level you need and then throw some loose soil in—this encourages good drainage. Grapes favor acid soil with a medium amount of organic matter mixed in.
- 4.** At the outset, prune vines to a single stem with two buds. Tie the strongest of the two shoots to your stake, fence or trellis.
- 5.** After the first year, prune at the tail end of winter, before buds appear. Leave four canes on each plant—they will produce your fruit.
- 6.** After one year, start mulching with straw or leaves and fertilize moderately using aged manure. In late winter or early spring spread the manure around the vine at a distance of one foot.

PASSPORT TO ITALY

mer so he can climb up and harvest fresh fruit at whim.


Watching the couple prepare roasted red peppers for freezing calls to mind insights offered by local food historian Clarissa Dillon. She suggests that Italian-American gardeners grow their own food not for nostalgia or because they can't afford to buy it at the supermarket, but because an Italian cook's standards are high and the cuisine is dependent on simple, fresh ingredients.

"My wife cans lots of the food, especially the tomatoes," says Ben. "When we go down to our house at the beach, we bring a lot of our own food that she's preserved. We also give away food to relatives and friends. I grow so many tomatoes, sweet peppers, hot peppers, and zucchinis that we have to. Sure, the birds eat some of my figs and grapes, but what they don't get, we eat or share with others."

In late summer and fall, the Durbanos get to work bringing in the harvest. Hot peppers dry on the garage roof, while sweet frying peppers are roasted and then stored in a basement freezer along with sweet chard, beets, cucumbers, chicory, bush beans, zucchini, celery and lettuces. Potatoes and onions are stored unfrozen in the basement as well. Garlic planted in October can be pulled up mid-July, ready for braiding and constant use in the kitchen, while sauces are made from plum tomatoes. They also make wine from Concord grapes. "I add a little brown sugar to the crushed grapes to make them ferment better," Ben notes proudly.

Winter weather has Ben tightly wrapping the fig tree in blankets and enclosing the huge rosemary bush with discarded windows. Lettuces settle into their cold frames. March brings not just winds, but also the urge to graft fruit trees (Ben grafted all the Bartlett pear trees in his orchard). And then comes spring, a time for tending to soil and planting.

On paper, the Durbanos' year looks much like that of other vegetable gardeners. Yet in the flesh, their plantings create a

special atmosphere, transporting visitors to a country where people live in and from their gardens. Since discovering this wonderful spot in Ardmore, I've whipped up a little herb and vegetable patch in my own backyard. Next spring I might plant a peach tree or build a grape arbor I can sit under with the kids. And if a volunteer pumpkin vine plans to overtake the boxwood in my "beautiful" front garden as it did last summer, I won't rip it out this time. I'll think of Ben, and let the squatter stay. 

Olivia Lehman has been a contributor to *Green Scene* since 1989.

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The Magic of Garden Rooms

Story and photography by Beverly Fitts



Outdoor rooms can do magical things. They add interest, character and structure to an ordinary backyard and make a small property seem larger. No longer corseted in formal hedges, today's garden rooms are informal enclosures designed and furnished for specific purposes like eating, playing and relaxing. Follow me to see how artists Marcia and Paul Spoor used various materials to create distinctive garden rooms—rooms that have transformed their 80-x-100-foot, flat suburban lot into a magical garden for adults and kids alike.

Left: Arches form doorways into distinctive garden rooms.

Right: Like an indoor room, the outdoor dining room has walls, floor and ceiling.



A

LFRESCO DINING

Not surprisingly, the main gathering spot in the Spoor's backyard is the outdoor dining room. It has a red brick terrace floor, and a pergola attached to the back of the house forms the ceiling. Vines and roses climb trellises creating tracery walls, enclosing the space and providing privacy from the neighbors. Plants are everywhere—in pots, planters, wall sconces, and vases. The room is furnished with a table covered with a blue-and-white checked cloth, blue metal chairs, a gas grill, and a birdcage. Clusters of dark purple grapes hang above our heads, invoking visions of Tuscany.

Below: The playhouse area is loosely enclosed and carpeted with herbaceous and woody plants.



THE WATER-GARDEN ROOM

Next we come to the water garden. Marcia and Paul shaped this second room from a garage wall, planting boxes, a white metal arch, and a formidable collection of potted plants and container water gardens. The area is too small to enclose with traditional hedges and shrubs, so Marcia and Paul used two towering trellises to partially enclose this diminutive room.

A veil of pyracantha and roses climb on one trellis, draping the entire garage wall. At right angles to the garage, Paul built a planting box to mimic a low wall. The planter and another trellis form a window-like opening and separate the space from the dining area. Several containers, the arch, and another raised bed complete the enclosure, creating an intimate space swaddled in plants. This room invites us to rest on an old stone bench, enjoy the bubbling sounds of a small fountain nestled in the planting box, and watch tiny fish swimming in water-filled pots and tubs.

THE MEADOW

Crossing the slate and brick floor of the water-garden room, a white metal arch invites us through a doorway to the next area. A soft pink rose, a violet clematis and a purple-leaf grape climb the arch and fall like a fringe before our eyes. The vines partially conceal the view ahead, creating a sense of mystery and suspense. Intrigued, we pass through the open doorway and into the Spoor's Lilliputian meadow.

The sun-drenched meadow is quite a contrast to the shady, enclosed rooms we just left. The little field is made from three small raised beds, none larger than 6 by 6 feet. In late summer, self-seeded rudbeckias and patrinias elbow their way to the edge of their wooden frames, then reach across narrow paths to form a solid mass of gold. Somehow, in spite of the meadow's elfin size, it conjures up the vast sunflower fields bordering the road from Assisi to Rome.



Left: Vines and roses grown on trellises mask barren walls and create verdant enclosures.

Below: *Vigna caracalla*



THE KITCHEN GARDEN

Farther along and to the right, a second arch—topped with an ornamental iron disk—marks the entrance to the kitchen garden. Marcia often trains the cherry tomato ‘Mini Pearl’ over the arch. “I have to prune a lot to keep it in shape,” she says, “but it’s really nice when the little tomatoes hang down from overhead.”

This fourth room is framed by the Spoor’s garage on the right and the neighbor’s on the left. Sweet peas and morning glories adorn one wall, scarlet runner beans the other. A fence connects the two garage

walls across the back of the property; espaliered apple trees form the final wall, enclosing this bountiful garden room.

Marcia grows her vegetables in raised beds; they make it easy to improve the soil and provide a protective edging for her crops. (She says she got tired of telling her five kids to “stay on the paths.”) To save space, Marcia trains her cucumbers up trellises made from PVC pipes and netting. Vines and plants reaching overhead create a partial ceiling, block our view of the neighbor’s house, and reinforce the aura of abundance. All she needs now are a few

MARCIA'S FAVORITE CLIMBERS

- *Clematis viticella*
- *Hedera colchica* 'Sulphur Heart'
(Persian ivy)
- *Ipomoea tricolor* 'Sunrise Mix'
(morning glory)
- *Ipomoea* 'Grandpa Ott'
(morning glory)
- *L. quamoclit* (cypress vine)
- *Pyracantha coccinea* 'Lalandei'
- *Rosa* 'Climbing Cecile Brunner'
- *Rosa* 'Inspiration'
- *Rosa* 'American Pillar'
- *Rosa* 'Zephirine Drouhin'
(purpleleaf grape)
- *Lathyrus odoratus* 'America'
(sweet pea)
- *Phaseolus coccineus*
'Painted Lady' (scarlet runner bean)



chickens and a crowing rooster to evoke the backyards of Sorrento.

A maze of kitchen-garden paths eventually leads to another arch, framing a glimpse of the children's play area. We step through the opening and into the world of a child's imagination.

THE MAGIC KINGDOM

In the shade of a cherry tree sits a blue and white playhouse. It has its own little bluestone patio and a front path announced by two twig teepees topped with terracotta flowerpots. The children's grandfather secretly built the playhouse, then installed it one Sunday morning while the family was in church. When the children returned, there it was like magic, complete with furniture, a tiny backyard, and a miniature pond with fish and tadpoles. The Spoor children are home-schooled, and the playhouse yard is the perfect outdoor classroom for an impromptu biology lesson. According to

Marcia, "It's also a favorite place for neighborhood cats."

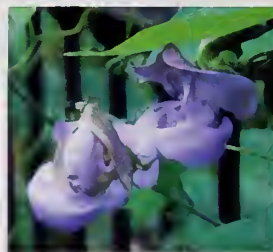
The yard surrounding the playhouse is a horticultural delight. Marcia is passionate about plants, and each year she starts scores of them from cuttings or seeds. Many of them find their home in this part of the garden, carpeting the floor and loosely enclosing the playhouse area in a thicket of greenery.

Visiting the Spoor's garden is a wondrous experience. Their exuberantly planted garden rooms transport us to another time and place. Casually enclosed with sundry materials from pergolas to pots, the rooms divide the garden and create the illusion of a much larger property. They transform an ordinary backyard into a garden rich in old-world charm, and they create a magical kingdom for children. 🌱

Beverly Fitts is a regular contributor to *Green Scene*

Above:

Vines and roses grown on trellises mask barren walls and create verdant enclosures.



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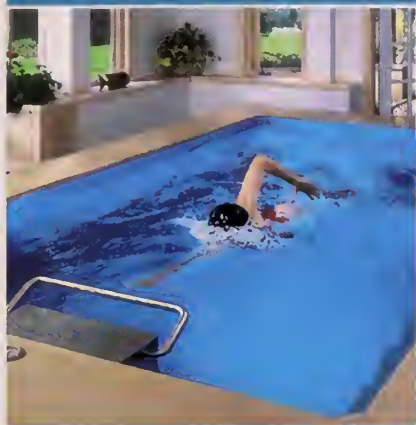
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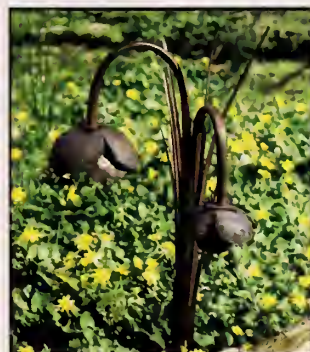
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Fruits of Your Labor



Story by L. Wilbur Zimmerman

The term “espalier” turns some people off. This artful method of growing fruit trees and other woody plants is often looked upon as being too esoteric for the average gardener. In reality, a little brushing up on ordinary pruning skills should easily dispel this misperception. Moreover, the aesthetic rewards of creating an espalier are unmatched by few other techniques in the gardening universe. So don’t let its name deter you—learning to train espaliers is simply the beginning of a grand new gardening adventure.

*A
Novice’s
Guide to
the Art
of the
Espalier*



Espalier.....

Getting Started


The first question a gardener should ask is: *Why do I want an espalier in my garden?* This will generate more questions: Is there a bare wall of the house or garage that will be enhanced by an espalier? Could it accent an architectural feature such as the corner of a structure or a chimney stack? Could a low wall or fence be made more attractive? Finally, are you willing to put in a little extra time to keep the growing plant within the confines of your design?

There are many different espalier "shapes" for you to consider. [See illustration at right.] My first attempt at growing an espalier was in 1938, when I purchased a four-armed, dwarf apple tree in a *palmette verrier* (or "candelabra") design. It grew 50 years where I had planted it—that is, until a new owner removed it to make an addition to the house.

Buying & Planting

For selection, you'll want to purchase either a dwarf fruit tree (such as an apple, crabapple, peach, or pear) or evergreen (yew, pyracantha, or even English ivy). There are, of course, many other plants that you can grow in an espalier form, but this should get you started. As for location, a south-facing exposure is best, as this will generate the greatest fruit production. You can attach your espalier to either a fence or a wall. If you go with the latter, the tree should be planted and supported sufficiently far from the wall to permit air circulation between the plant and the wall.

Before you plant, it also helps to experiment with pencil sketches of different sites and kinds of plants, largely to find the right scale and harmony with the rest of the garden design. When selecting plants, take your drawings with you to the nursery. This was very helpful when I went searching for specimens of *Cedrus atlanticus* 'Glauca Pendula' that I planned to espalier. There were almost 50 trees to



Above: A *palmette verrier* in Villanova, PA. **Right:** While using a trellis, fence or wooden wall is not too difficult for training an espalier, attaching the plant to a brick or masonry wall is a more formidable task, but not impossible.

Espalier Shapes



Oblique Cordon on Wires



Palmette Verrier or Candelabra



Belgian Fence



Double U Candelabra



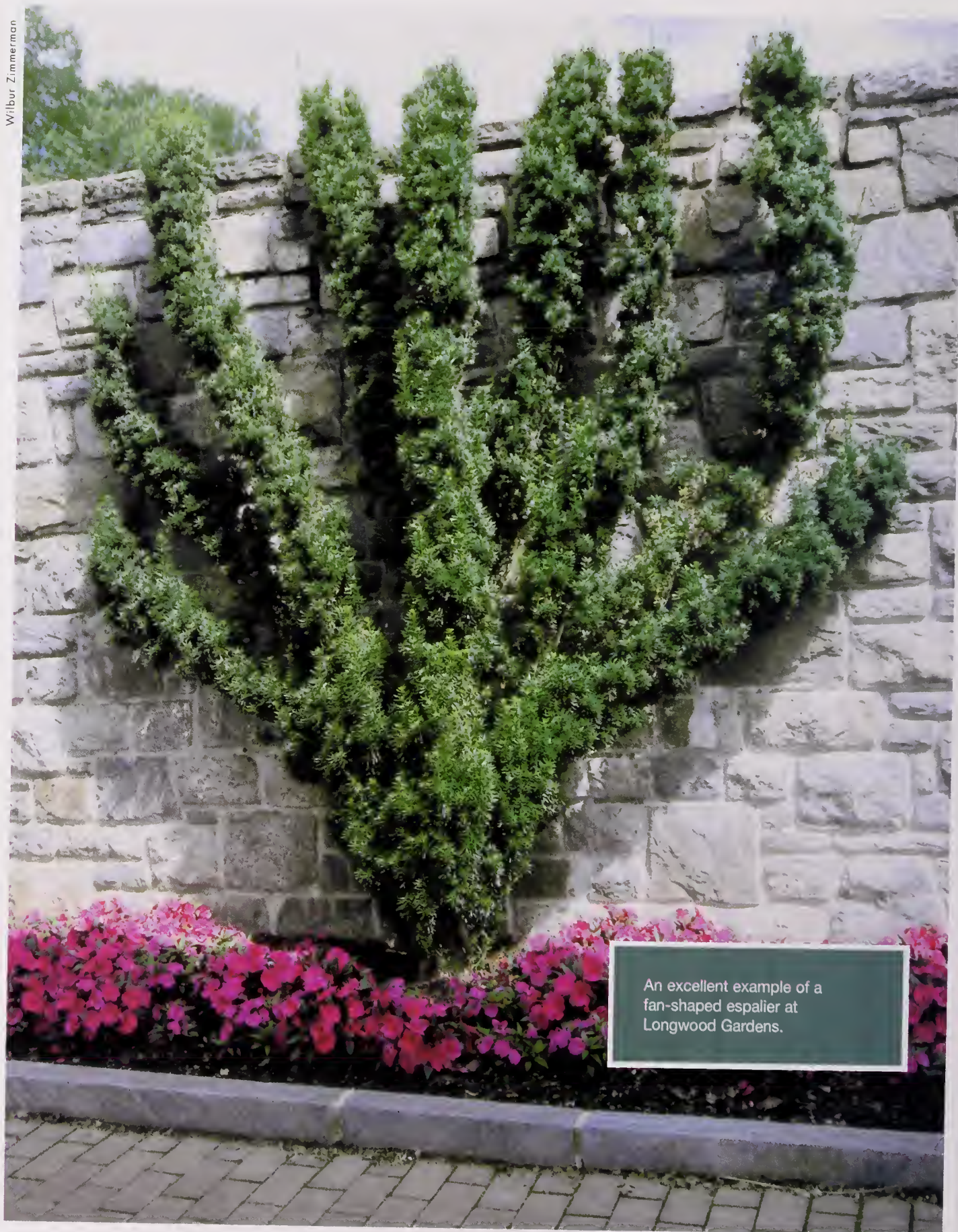
Fan



Horizontal T or Tier on Wall

choose from, but in order to achieve the “candelabra” look I had in mind, I had to select a tree that had three sets of opposing branches stemming from the trunk, at the right spacing from each other to give the

proper scale. (It was important to choose the *Cedrus ‘Glauca Pendula’* because its branches grow at right angles to the trunk.) Once home, I removed all the other branches and shortened the 12-foot



An excellent example of a fan-shaped espalier at Longwood Gardens.

Espalier

trees to 6 feet. Almost immediately, I had attained the *palmette verrier* form I envisioned.

For bare-root fruit trees, it's preferable to plant them in late fall rather than spring, when so many other garden chores are pressing for attention. (Fall planting also allows a longer period of root development prior to the heat stresses of summer.) In fall, the soil bed can also be prepared ahead of time, allowing time for soil analysis. Since espaliers are often set next to a house or wall, this is important, as soil next to a building has been altered and may need replenishment with compost. As with any garden, you should also check its pH level (for example, the pH for apple trees should be between 6 and 7).

Good drainage is very important, too. Newly planted trees need loose, loamy soil. When preparing the planting hole, I loosen the edges and the bottom of the hole with a hand cultivator before planting—to a depth of several inches—and incorporate a trowelful or two of gypsum. Don't pack fertilizer in the soil near the roots. Instead, top dress early in March, preferably with a high-phosphorus fertilizer, like 10-15-10. (Do not fertilize after mid to late July, as this stimulates late woody growth that will be too tender to withstand subfreezing temperatures.)

Pruning Branches & Buds

Most pruning techniques for espaliers strive to keep the tree in an elegant, but dwarfed form—you'll want to keep it at about 6 feet high. Pruning and thinning of branches also encourages high-quality, unblemished fruit of good size.

Dwarf trees usually begin fruiting by the second or third year after planting, where-

as a standard tree seldom produces fruit before several years of age. And, being only a little taller than the gardener, dwarf trees make all the maintenance easy to accomplish while standing at ground level.

An espalier's first year is crucial. During this period, before fruit production has started, new branches and shoots grow very rapidly. It is the gardener's job to guide this growth by carefully pruning unwanted shoots, as often as a half dozen times a summer. Several basic elements of plant physiology come into play during the process of controlling the espalier. Sap—the tree's nourishment—flows vertically with much greater force than in the lateral direction. This requires heavier pruning of vertical shoots, aside from the ones you want to keep. You'll also want to prune any shoots (or "spurs," as they're also known) that grow downward or back towards the fence or wall.

At this stage, you must decide how much fruit production you'll sacrifice for the desired aesthetic effect of the *palmette verrier* form. If you allow all the branches to grow unchecked, you will get more fruit, but lose the espalier shape. Again, an espalier is simply a small tree that is carefully pruned.

By mastering these and more advanced forms of espalier pruning (such as "disbudding"), you will gain a range of techniques that can be used to artfully control the growth of many other woody plants. And once you know these, you'll find additional ways to create elegant espaliers throughout your garden. 🌿

Wilbur Zimmerman is now in his fourth decade as a PHS member and longtime volunteer. He was chair of the committee that launched *Green Scene* in 1972 and continues to be an active member of the current Publications Committee.



Resources

To learn more about espalier pruning techniques, PHS is pleased to offer a workshop entitled "Specialized Pruning" at Meadowbrook Farm on September 20, 2001 from 10:00 am to noon. For more information, call activities manager Chela Kleiber at (215) 988-8775 or email ckleiber@pennhort.org

To learn more about grafting fruit trees, read the article, "Forgotten Fruit," in the November 1993 issue of *Green Scene*. Also read Wilbur Zimmerman's original article on espaliers in the January 1975 issue. Back issues or reprints available at (215) 988-8769.



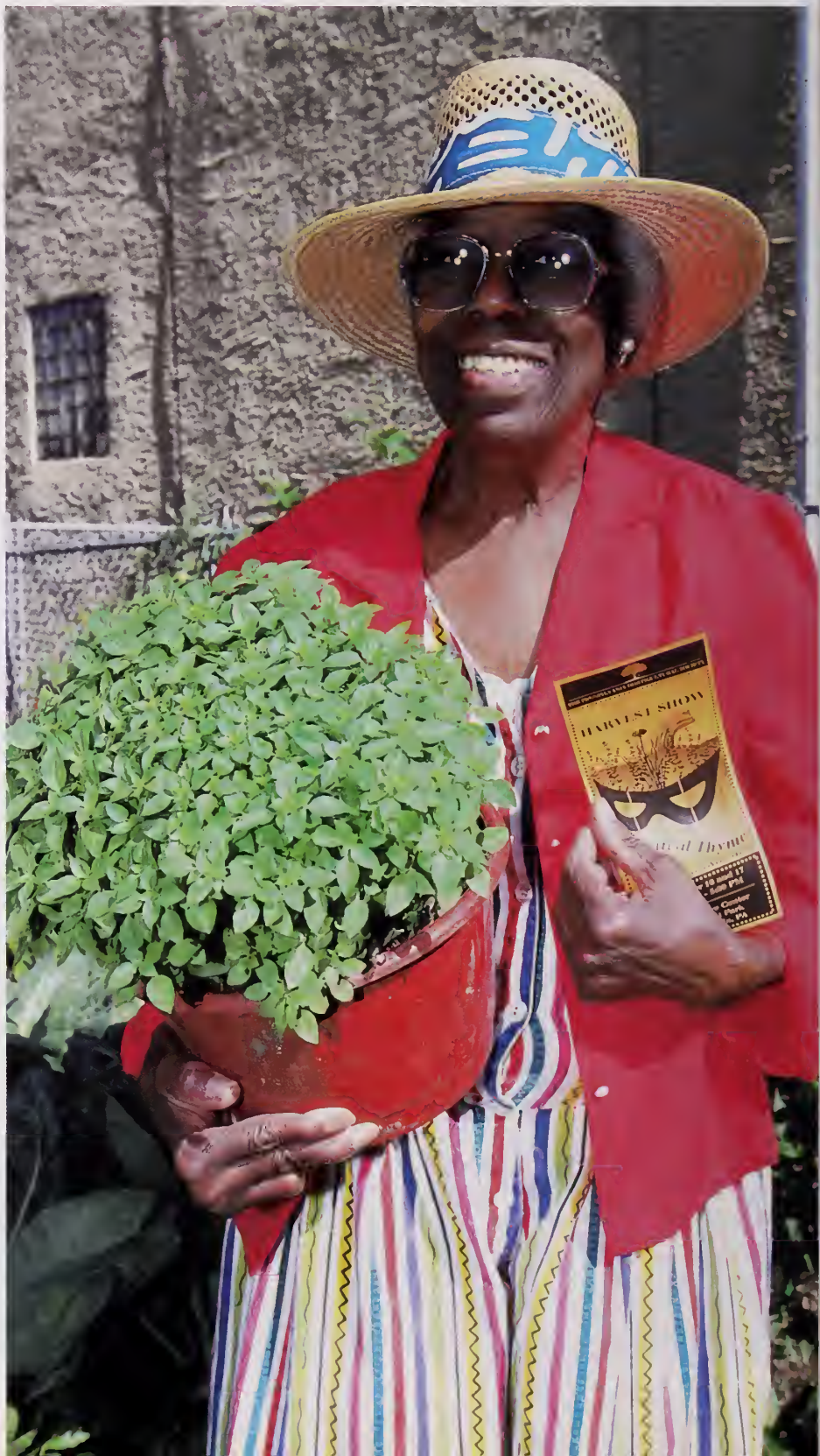
Harvest

Story by Jane Carroll & Dorothy Wright

Each September, the Philadelphia Harvest Show draws thousands of garden lovers to Fairmount Park for two days of horticultural competitions, games, and shopping. Among those present at this fun Pennsylvania Horticultural Society event are the many exhibitors, who bring their prized flowers, vegetables, houseplants, and culinary goods to display and to vie for blue ribbons. Here is the tale of two kinds of Harvest Show competitors, one group from the city and another from the suburbs, both of whom want to show the public just how good their gardens grow.

REAPING A HARVEST IN THE CITY

When the City of Philadelphia tore down the abandoned house next door to Naomi Adams, leaving an unsightly empty lot, she knew something had to be done. She enlisted the help of a neighborhood minister, Rev. Larry Falcon, who collected some fencing material to enclose the lot. Then Doris, Rev. Falcon and several other members of their neighborhood organization, South of Market Against Drugs (SOMAD), started a community garden with help from Philadelphia Green.



Show Heroes

Eleven years later the SOMAD garden, located on South 43rd Street in West Philadelphia, is still going strong. At this time of year, Naomi, 83, and her seven fellow gardeners are gearing up for their annual fall ritual—entering the PHS Harvest Show. They're growing all their favorites: a bounty of vegetables, including collard greens, turnips, kale, okra, broccoli, squash, and tomatoes, as well as show-stopping flowers like calla lily and climbing roses.

About two weeks before the Harvest Show, the SOMAD members walk through the garden, picking out the best-looking plants from each of the eight individual plots, looking for blue-ribbon entries. The day before the Show, they make final selections and water the garden thoroughly so the flowers and vegetables will look their best when cut. Then at harvest time, they carefully place the plants directly into containers of water and take them straight to the Horticulture Center. Naomi keeps a list of every plant along with the name of the gardener.

Naomi first entered the Harvest Show on her own after the garden's very first season. Her friend, Betty Richardson, who gardens in South Philadelphia, had talked her into it. "I'll never forget it," Naomi remembers. "I didn't get things there on time and I didn't bring enough different entries. It was very disheartening." Then West Philly councilwoman Jannie Blackwell helped Naomi learn the ropes and gently pushed her to try again. Now, as a group, the SOMAD gardeners are big prize-winners. One year they walked away with a total of 18 ribbons.

Naomi and her fellow gardeners hope to bring home another crop of prizes from this year's Show. But the garden offers its own rewards. "It's such a peaceful place," she remarks, "especially when it's in full bloom and the birds are singing. It brings a lot of satisfaction—with or without the ribbons." —JC



LOVE IN THE GARDEN

When Sharon and Bill Fullerton first met, Bill was already a veteran gardener. "As far back as I can remember, I was interested in plants," Bill says. "As a little kid I had a vegetable garden and plants on my bedroom windowsill. For my 21st birthday, my father and I built my first greenhouse."

But for Sharon, it was different. "Growing up, I always got stuck with the weeding chores so it wasn't quite as fun," she says. "When I got involved with Bill, I thought, if I want to spend time with him, I better get involved in gardening!"

Since then, the Fullertons have become a real team in every sense: he taught her gardening, and she taught him the art of stained glass. Now he creates stained-glass panels for clients of his faux-painting and finishing business. They grow most of their plants from seeds—lots and lots of seeds, in fact, all sprouting under lights on the bottom shelf of the 4-by-8-foot stained glass work table in their basement. "Last

year I had 400 seedlings," Sharon says, sheepishly. "I sometimes get carried away."

When Bill moved into the Tudor-style house in Drexel Hill, Pennsylvania in 1978, he found a typical suburban yard with a mature oak in front, some yews, rhododendrons, azaleas and boxwood hedges, but no garden beds to speak of. Today it's a different story. An oakleaf hydrangea and witch hazel grow in the front yard, along with bedded areas, including one Bill and Sharon call "Blue Heaven," which features pulmonaria, forget-me-nots and other blue flowers. Out went the boxwood along the side of the

Left: Naomi Adams, leader of the SOMAD community garden.

Above: Residents seen at work, readying their plants for the Harvest Show.

Save These Dates!

2001 Philadelphia Harvest Show

When:

September 15 & 16,
10am–5pm

Where:

The Horticulture Center, Fairmount Park (just off the Montgomery Drive exit of the Schuylkill Expressway).

Admission: \$6 for adults; \$2 for children

Information:

www.libertynet.org/phs
or (215) 988-8800



Above: A glimpse of the Fullerton's serene water garden.

Right: The couple in their garden.



house; an espaliered apple tree is taking its place. In the backyard, Bill built a greenhouse. Beside it, the vegetable patch overflows each summer with peppers, eggplant, yellow squash, and other vegetables and herbs, while raspberries flourish close by.

In September 1994, the Fullertons entered the annual Philadelphia Harvest Show for the first time. Their tomatoes, raspberries, and a loofah gourd were among some 2,500 entries in hundreds of different categories, where grand flower arrangements, gigantic vegetables, delicate pressed plants, tasty baked goods, container-grown annuals, and children's painted pumpkins all compete for blue ribbons. "I was thrilled that I won a couple of ribbons my first time out—second place for the loofah gourd and third place for the raspberries," Sharon says. "I've got the gardening bug now. I even gave up a honeymoon to go to the Harvest Show!"

Indeed, the Fullertons married in 1995 right in their backyard garden...the week

before their second Harvest Show. "I was entering the challenge category, so it was either a honeymoon or the Harvest Show," Sharon says. "We took the honeymoon two years later at a French chateau during its annual garden show," Bill adds.

And Sharon, whom Bill describes as the "point person" for the Harvest Show, still loves a challenge. "In 2000, we entered the greatest variety ever, including cutting, vegetable, evergreen, herb container and challenge categories," Sharon says, "and we won 17 ribbons." The challenge of a small lot doesn't deter the couple from growing large plants. They even appropriated some space on the property of Bill's sister in New Jersey, whose five acres give the Fullertons more room to grow gems for this year's Harvest Show. As Bill reflects, "We just enjoy all kinds of herbs, medicinal plants, flowers, trees, shrubs, and vegetables—we like it all. So many plants, so little room!" —DW

GARLIC BREATH

By Dorene Pasekoff

After winning bronze medals at the Harvest Show two years in a row for the garlic I grow in my local community garden, folks started asking why it's my favorite crop. I grow garlic because we enjoy eating it as a vegetable, and because pests don't like it. No matter how many deer or slugs find your garden, they'll always leave garlic alone.

Garlic also helps build soil at my community garden, located behind the Fairview Housing Project in Phoenixville. Every August, I cover my raised beds with fresh horse manure and straw. The hot manure turns to compost by October when it's time to plant the garlic. It also supplies enough nitrogen to feed it throughout the season and amends the soil for whoever will be gardening in this spot next year (we rotate annually).

Last year's wet growing season was tough for most vegetables, but raised beds saved the garlic from root rot. In addition to the rain, deer also picked last year to invade the garden for the first time. Viewing the devastation in mid-June, I would never have believed we would win the Harvest Show's Sweepstakes Award that September. But, with teamwork, we did.

I personally have always enjoyed the Harvest Show's "Bounty by the Basket" division, where you literally create a bountiful basket of produce to exhibit. But while harvest-

ing the garlic last July, I realized that most of my fellow gardeners had few producing garlic plants. If we combined forces in the "Bounty" division, though, I figured we could make a respectable showing at the Harvest Show.

So in September, everyone brought their produce to my house. I picked out the best garlic sets of three for individual entries, then passed the rest to Carla Pomponi and Irene Sobotincic, our gardener/florists, to create baskets. Our most dramatic cooperative entry was for Floral Bounty, where Carla took flowers, herbs, and okra from each gardener's plot and designed an arrangement in my cousin Ed's workboot, spattered with genuine mud from our community garden. The cooperative effort paid off. Ten of our Bounty entries took blue ribbons, which—along with 18 individual blues—won us the overall Sweepstakes Award!

As we learned, garlic endures all, and this year, I planted 20 varieties. And no matter how challenging our growing season becomes, I know our community garden will enter at least

one garlic basket in this year's Harvest Show.

Dorene Pasekoff is coordinator at St. John's United Church of Christ Organic Community Garden in Phoenixville, PA.



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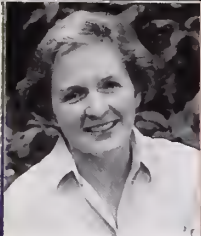
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The PASSIONATE PERENNIALIST

BY BEVERLY FITTS

A Peony for Shade

When I needed a gift for a shade gardener who has everything, I asked a purveyor of rare plants for a recommendation. He handed me *Paeonia japonica* saying, "This likes shade." A peony that likes shade? I was dubious. Besides, I'm not a great admirer of peonies. They're a little too Mae West for me. You know, too much of a good thing. He assured me this isn't the case for the Japanese peony. Skeptical, but definitely intrigued, I bought three for my friend and one for me.

Now, experience has taught me that many people's idea of shade is more like part sun in my garden. So when I got home I planted my peony in part sun at the top of my north facing hill. It was spring, not the best time to plant peonies. Fall is much better. By August of that dry summer, it had burned to a crisp.

The next spring, however, it reappeared. Less skeptical about this herbaceous peony's shade loving properties, I transplanted it farther into the woods. Expecting the move to set it back for at least a year, I was pleasantly surprised to see it bloom that summer.

Paeonia japonica is definitely not a Mae West peony. In fact, this understated woodland species is the most demure peony I've ever seen—more like Gwyneth Paltrow. The soft, sweet look of its single flowers prompts you to cup them in your hand and caress them like a baby's cheek. Prominent yellow stamens add sparkle and panache.

While the 3-inch white flowers are big enough to attract attention in my woodland garden, they're also delicate enough to fit perfectly into its naturalistic theme. Depending on the weather, they grace my garden for about a week in May, around

Beverly Fitts



the same time as many azaleas (though they bloom for a shorter time during hot periods).

The subsequent seed capsules remind me of plump, abbreviated pea pods, and open in late summer revealing a colorful red interior and bright blue seeds. They last several weeks and make a colorful addition to the August garden.

The Japanese peony is native to deciduous woods in the mountainous areas of Japan. Although introduced into cultivation in 1910 by Miyabe and Takeda, it's seldom seen in modern gardens. So, it was a good choice for my friend.

This peony enjoys light to medium shade and moisture in spring, especially during its first summer. Plant the tubers about 2 feet apart, and set the buds from 1 to 2 inches below the soil—too deep and they won't flower. Hardy in Zones 5 to 8,

its grayish green leaves form good size clumps about 20 inches high and wide.

Trust me, there really is a peony that likes shade. The Japanese peony even blooms happily in the full shade of mature trees on my north-facing hill where the soil is humusy, acid and well-drained. Since peonies are heavy feeders, I apply a balanced fertilizer (5-10-10) each fall when the roots are actively growing, and occasionally in the spring.

You can propagate this pricey peony by immediately sowing the ripe seed and leaving the pots outdoors for at least one winter. Or you can just wait for it to self-seed. Mature plants may also be divided, but just make sure each crown has several eyes and an adequate root system. Given these conditions, your Japanese peonies will provide you with many years of subtle pleasure. 🌱

Sources

Since fall is the perfect time to plant this rare, shade-loving peony, order your plants now from any of the following sources:

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Lewisberry, PA 17339
(717) 938-8677

Brand Peony Farm

Box 862
St. Cloud, MN 56302

Plant Delights Nursery

Raleigh, NC 27603
(919) 772-4794



BY ADAM LEVINE

Get a Grip

Some people think that gardeners are born with green thumbs. I disagree; I know I had to work for mine. My thumbs used to be black with dirt, as were my face, clothes, knees, arms, hands. I wouldn't have it any other way, and in fact, turning a thumb from black to green is a necessary right of passage. Not only is my garden path littered with carcasses of the unfortunate victims of my tender ministrations, but playing in the dirt is one of the best parts of gardening. It's also one of the few ways, as an adult, that I get to go outside and play as I did as a child—only yesterday's mudpies are today's actual edibles and beautiful beds and borders.

I mention thumbs in reference to garden tools, because thumbs, fingers, and hands are among a gardener's greatest tools. Hands are the best tools for weeding and dead-heading, for example. Our hands can teach us volumes about our gardens, figuratively as they connect us to the soil, and literally when we gauge the soil moisture in a flower pot. But it seems that, more and more, we want to skip this part of school. To read advertisements in gardening magazines, one would think that the goal of gardening is to not use our hands at all. Why else all the promotion of low- or no-maintenance plants, tools, and products, as well as the endless output of new gadgets designed to

make gardening faster (and with the unspoken goal of helping us keep our hands clean).


Among the endless numbers of gardening tools on the market today, the most disturbing to me are the chemicals touted as

others can, and by treating them all as equals—spraying the mass of offending greenery instead of treating each species of weed as the unique creation it is—we never learn the difference.

One of the best ways we can learn about

our gardens is the same way we learn about our friends—we need to get intimate with them. And since plants can't talk (wouldn't that make our jobs easier?), the best way to communicate with them, to know how they feel, is by touching them. Who would suspect that a yard-wide mat of chickweed could possibly be growing from a single

slender network of roots, and could be so easily pulled up by hand? Even pachysandra, which is a weed in the woods around my house, can be rolled up like a carpet if attacked in the right way.

Learning to use the appropriate tool for each situation comes with experience, and that saves time and effort better directed to other worthwhile tasks. Discovering that some things are not as difficult as they might appear—once we get down on the ground and let our hands see what our eyes couldn't from a distance—is one of the great joys of gardening. Sure, a flame-thrower might kill a dandelion, but does life need to be that complicated? Sometimes all we need is to do is get a grip...and pull. 



Pete Prown

replacements for handwork. We're exhorted to fertilize with manufactured doses of N, K and P, rather than using the less exact and more time-consuming, but more rewarding method—making and using compost. We're sold miraculous weed killers that get rid of the pesky plants (and anything else they may mistakenly land on) with a single squirt from a spray bottle.

I'm not denying that chemicals occasionally have their place. In some cases the only way to corral a stampeding herd of invasive weeds is with carefully timed applications of herbicides. But for everyday use, such chemical weed controls are not only a symptom of cultural laziness, but represent the loss of an opportunity for learning. Yes, some weeds can't be pulled by hand, but



UNCOMMON GROUNDCOVERS

BY PATRICIA A. TAYLOR

Bigroot Geranium

With so many little-known but gorgeous groundcovers out there, it was hard to decide which one to feature in this, my last column. I had been leaning toward cliff green (*Paxistima canbyi*) because of its dark, narrow evergreen leaves and tidy 1-foot-tall by 3-feet-wide appearance in sunny settings. When I included it in my lecture at this year's Philadelphia Flower Show, however, one member of the audience said it had died three times on her. With that information, I decided not to feature it in this column, even though I have successfully grown it for two years. Try it yourself by all means, though.

Next, I toyed with the idea of 'David's Choice' artemisia (*A. pycnocephala*), an elegant cousin of the widely grown 'Silver Mound'. It forms a dense, silver gray mound 3-to-6 inches high and up to 2 feet across in full sun. A California native, it tolerates salt air and is hardy in the mid-Atlantic, as long as it has good drainage. If I had a seashore garden, I would certainly like to have it decorating a sandy corner. Since I garden inland in clay-packed soil, I went on to consider other candidates.

Two other West Coast natives that should do well here also sounded intriguing: sulfur flower (*Eriogonum umbellatum* var. *polyanthum*) features blue-green foliage and lemon yellow blossoms throughout sunny summer areas, and creeping holly grape (*Mahonia repens*) is a low-growing, deer-resistant, shade-loving shrub with yellow spring flowers and dark blue berries in late summer. Since they have yet to be tested in my organic gardens in Princeton, New Jersey, I

felt it inappropriate to feature them.

That left bigroot geranium (*G. macrorrhizum*). Though I have had it in my borders for over a decade—and therefore consider it somewhat common—I am continually amazed to learn that many of my gardening acquaintances are unfamiliar with it.

Patricia Taylor



Native to southern Europe but hardy to Zone 4, bigroot geranium grows 12 to 18 inches high and forms dense mats up to 2 feet wide. Weeds rarely poke through its thick carpet.

The foliage—rich green leaves with 5 to 7 lobes—is highly fragrant. In his book *The Exuberant Garden*, William H. Frederick, Jr. writes that it is one of his favorite scent-producing plants. Personally, the only time I notice its aromatic qualities is when I cut

a sprig for an arrangement; at such time I classify the odors that are released as pungent rather than fragrant. Deer seem to share my feelings, for the creatures rarely, if ever, eat this plant. The same can also be said of rabbits, groundhogs, and slugs.

I have two bigroot geraniums. The species plant produces pinkish-magenta flowers for two to three May weeks. 'Ingwersen's Variety' bears light pink flowers for five weeks, starting in early May. The foliage on both acquires red and yellow tones in late September, while those leaves that do not color remain evergreen over winter. Not surprisingly, bigroot geranium patches look a bit bare by spring. With the first hint of warm weather, however, they quickly fill up with new growth.

Though several sources say these plants can be grown in full sun, I find they fry in summer when so placed in my gardens. They are perfect for dry shade and, if given good drainage, can easily survive many a heavy downpour.

There's a newcomer on the market named 'Spessart'. Jill Weatherill, a transplanted Englishwoman who has created a Princeton garden that is stunning even in humid summers, says that it is an exceptionally heavy bloomer, with blush white flowers veined in pink. She's going to give me some of its easily-lifted roots.

Thus, reader, after sharing information on uncommon groundcovers with all of you this past year, I have finally acquired one for myself. What a fitting way to say farewell. ☐

All above groundcovers can be ordered from www.forestfarm.com. Keep an eye out for a new series of columns in the next issue of *Green Scene*.

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Up on the Roof

Story by Jane Carroll

A rooftop garden is an increasingly common sight in Philadelphia and other urban areas. It's a great solution to the problem of limited gardening space. But how about a rooftop meadow? "Green roofs," made of thin layers of insulation, soil, and living plants on top of conventional roofing materials, have been used for many years in European cities to cope with stormwater runoff and soaring energy costs.

Philadelphia-based engineer Charlie Miller first learned about green roofs when he traveled to Germany. "It's a huge industry in Europe," he says, "I was extremely impressed." But with the exception of a few cities like Portland, Oregon, the

concept has been slow to catch on in the United States.

Hoping to change that, Miller started his own company, Roofscapes, Inc., which completed its first project in 1998—a 3,000-square-foot green roof at the Fencing Academy of Philadelphia. Mark Masters, the academy's director, jumped at the opportunity. "We're proud to be on the 'cutting edge,'" he notes wryly. "It has definitely made our apartment above the academy (where he lives) much more comfortable. There's a section of flat roof right next to the apartment, which used to give off a lot of reflected heat in the summer. Now, it's much better. Besides, it's infinitely more pleasant to look out the window and see a meadow instead of a tar roof."

According to Miller and other proponents, green roofs promise significant benefits. They protect the underlying roof from water and sun, reduce heating and cooling costs, and even absorb sound. On a larger scale, green roofs may help reduce the "heat island" effect of large metropolitan areas.

And unlike a garden, green roofs require little maintenance, even in drought conditions. Miller's company has developed a design specifically

for the Mid-Atlantic region, favoring tough plants like *Sedum*. "On a green roof," he explains, "*Sedum* gets a competitive advantage that it wouldn't have in an open field where grasses would crowd it out. So the extreme conditions actually help create a durable groundcover."

So why aren't green roofs popping up like dandelions after a spring rain? Some experts question their cost effectiveness, citing a high initial investment compared to savings. But one thing seems sure: rooftop meadows are a novel way to add

aesthetic interest to your house and garden. If the idea catches on in Philadelphia, it could give a whole new meaning to William Penn's phrase, "greene countrie towne." ☐

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10 Enter the Flower Show!

How do you enter the Philadelphia Flower Show? Beverly Fitts shows us the way in this story of a 12-year-old boy who entered for the first time...and came home with several winning ribbons. See what it's like to be a first-time exhibitor and go through the exciting process of participating in the world's largest indoor flower show. Come join the fun!



22 The Strange History of Pelargoniums

Art and history merge in this absorbing tale of the pelargonium, commonly known to millions of gardeners as the "annual geranium." Tied into this story is Rembrandt Peale's 1801 masterpiece, "Rubens Peale with a Geranium," a painting that tells us much about the state of botanical nomenclature 200 years ago. Add to that a cast of characters including a flotilla of 17th century traders, Linnaeus, and even the colonial city of Philadelphia itself, and you will see why this plant's history is so intriguing to us gardeners.

22 The 2002 PHS Gold Medal Winners

Join nurseryman Joe Gray as he proudly introduces the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's annual Gold Medal Plant Award winners. If you're looking for great woody plants for your property, this year's Gold Medal plants should get you off to a good start.

28 Michael Dirr on Woody Plants

Acknowledged as one of the leading authorities on woody plants, Michael Dirr recommends numerous plants that grow well in the Mid-Atlantic region. From trees to shrubs, here are a few of Dr. Dirr's top picks.

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The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society motivates people to improve the quality of life and create a sense of community through horticulture.

Cover Photo of *Acer palmatum* by Rob Cardillo

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GREEN scene

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When gardeners share tales of their favorite plants, the conversation rarely veers towards woodies. Instead, they will discuss the latest perennial fad or the hottest annual of the moment. But what of the woody plant, that venerable statesman of the horticultural world? What is a fine garden

Using Woody Plants

without a few well-situated trees, shrubs, or vines? In this issue, we'll be taking a closer look at the world of woodies, including profiles of the winners of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's 2002 Gold Medal Plant Awards (see page 22). There's also an interview with woody plant expert Michael Dirr, as well as pieces on design and using woodies in containers.

To learn more about this special group of plants, we canvassed the staff here at PHS and asked them to share their own growing tips. From our Shows department, production manager Kathy Mills noted that "siting is crucial, because with a woody plant, you can't just pop it out and move it to another spot if you don't like where it is, at least not after the first few years." On that same train of thought, public relations manager Steve Maurer added, "Woody plants can become fairly large, but sometimes people buy a small plant without thinking about how big it's going to get in the future. Read the plant's information tag carefully. You don't want to put a shrub that gets 12-feet wide in a tiny corner of your property."

On the subject of planting, membership manager Betsy Gullan suggests, "Develop a mixed border using just shrubs. If you pick the right woodies, you can have plenty of flowers, as well as terrific structure for the rest of your property. You can also visit local arboreturns to see how they combine woody shrubs, trees and vines. For example, the Morris Arboretum has a wonderful winter

shrub border that provides visual interest all year long. My favorite seasonal woodies include tree peonies in the spring and viburnums in the fall."

As for availability, Gold Medal Plant Award coordinator Joe Ziccardi says there is a new mindset among homeowners shopping for woodies: "People are finally looking for rugged, but beautiful native plants that can tolerate the soil and climate of our region, and are pest resistant. They frankly are getting tired of paying good money for hybrid rhododendrons and azaleas and then watching them die because of our heavy clay soil. So it's been up to the nursery trade to provide them with alternatives, and that's largely what the Gold Medal plant program is about."

On the subject of care, our outreach manager Patricia Schrieber offers, "Small

shrubs are often perfect in containers, especially when mixed with tropical annuals like coleus or sweet-potato vine. Just be careful about sheltering them in winter, as prolonged exposure to cold winds can dry out the plants and eventually kill them. Also, make sure to mark small plants with a stake, so you don't accidentally hit them with a lawn mower or weed whacker. Damaged bark can invite pests and disease, either of which can be fatal to the plant."

"And one more thing—fall is a great time to plant woodies," concludes Steve, "This gives them time to set roots before winter, as well as a jumpstart in spring."

All good words of wisdom. Now it's your turn to learn more about woody plants...and try a few on your property.

As you may notice when you flip through the pages of this issue, we have a new round of columns for your enjoyment (starting on page 34). This year's crop of columnists includes well-known horticulturist Kathryn Andersen, who will be writing about fascinating bulbs for your garden, and garden writer Alexandra Basinski, who will contribute a column on herbs. Finally, veteran writer/photographer Rob Cardillo will be enlightening us on the merits of organic gardening in his series, "Organic Matters."

I welcome each of these writers to the *Green Scene* fold and am sure they will provide us with plenty of interesting garden insights in the coming year. I'd also like to thank this past year's round of writers, who did such a marvelous job with their columns: Beverly Fitts, Adam Levine, and Patricia A. Taylor. Congratulations on a job well done.

Pete Brown
greenscene@pennhort.org



Contest winner Richard MacDonald seen above digging his stunning water garden.

In a Country Garden

The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's City Gardens Contest has been recognizing the efforts of urban gardeners for many years. But when Robert Ryan, a former chair of the PHS Council, purchased a property in north central Pennsylvania many years ago, he decided to take the contest with him to the country. Thus the City Gardens Contest's "country cousin" was born.

Now in its ninth year, the PHS Country Gardens Contest is held each summer in Bradford, Sullivan, Susquehanna, and Wyoming counties, where idyllic farms dot the landscape and the Endless Mountains provide a scenic backdrop for home gardens. Judges travel 250 miles over the four sparsely populated counties, encouraging talented gardeners who are often

Louise Bagnall displays her green-thumb talents.



reluctant to “show off” by entering. The winners enjoy an awards luncheon and receive cash prizes and PHS memberships.

Last year’s winner in the Specialty Garden category, for example, was Richard MacDonald of Susquehanna, PA, who took the blue ribbon for his superb water garden. As Mr. MacDonald notes, “Though I have been in a wheelchair since 1992, last year I decided I wanted a water garden, so I dug it myself. It’s 11 feet long by 6 feet wide, and about 2 feet deep. I stocked it with five koi, three gold fish, and 18 pots of water lilies.”

“Indeed, there is a growing interest in horticulture in this region,” adds Ryan, who coordinates the contest with Don Felley, Bob’s successor as PHS Council chair and another long-time resident of the area. “And the competition is having an impact. Gardens that were entered in earlier contests show wonderful improvements from year to year.”

Ryan hopes the contest will continue to grow, building a community of gardeners, who, unlike their row-home-dwelling city counterparts, are often separated by miles of meandering country roads. For information about entering the contest next year, please contact special-events manager Flossie Narducci at (215) 988-8897 or email: fnarducc@pennhort.org

—Jane Carroll



MY FAVORITE MUM. It’s fall and you’re already on the lookout for a great chrysanthemum to celebrate the season. The My Favorite Company has just introduced the perennial mum ‘**Autumn Red**’, a new hybrid with masses of daisy-shaped flowers and, reputedly, superior cold hardiness (down to Zone 3b). Requiring no pinching, ‘Autumn Red’ also lures monarch butterflies to the garden. Will this mum be as hardy and low maintenance as promised? Only time will tell...but in the interim, enjoy its dusty red hue in the garden.

NEW ROSE WINNERS. The All-America Rose Selection Award has been handed out for 2002, and the winners are **Love & Peace** and **Starry Night**. Introduced by Bailey Nurseries of St. Paul, Minnesota, Love & Peace is a hybrid tea with 5-inch flowers of golden yellow edged with pink. It grows to 4-5 feet high with a 3-foot spread. A great tea for a formal garden or for cutting.

Starry Night, introduced by Edmunds’ Roses of Wilsonville, Oregon, is a spreading landscape rose (about 3 by 3 feet in cool climates) for borders, large plantings, and even groundcover. It is a hybrid of ‘Anisley Dickson’ and *Rosa wichurana*, and sports masses of bright, white flowers. (www.rose.org)



Tried Green Tomatoes?

In the last issue, we shared a technique for saving your favorite tomato seeds.

This time, let's look at another seasonal tomato treat.

—Editor



Rosemarie Vassalluzzo

As these cool, crisp days of autumn add a snap to the air, we begin to realize that it will be 10 long months before we taste another juicy, ripe Big Boy or a handful of warm Sweet 100's, red all the way through from the hot summer sun. Indeed, like all tomato lovers, we find ourselves mourning the end of this delectable summer treat.

But take heart, there is a way to extend the glories of summer. One way to stretch the tomato season is to serve up some delectable green tomatoes, just like our ancestors did. The early American settlers used everything they produced in the garden, even green tomatoes. It is not surprising, then, that many tasty green-tomato recipes were developed in the colonies.

Nowadays, however, green tomatoes are too often scorned, considered the underachiever of the vegetable garden. We see them hanging there in all their green glory; a few hard frosts and they will be gone. The problem is that most people don't know what to do with them.

What we need at this time of year are some enticing new green-tomato recipes. We all know of the fabled fried green tomato, but below are two delicious examples. Give them a try—you might even understand why some people actually plant tomatoes *just* to harvest the green ones.

—Rosemarie P. Vassalluzzo

Green Tomato Pie

3 cups sliced green tomatoes, drained
6 tbsp. lemon juice
1-1/3 cup sugar
4 tsp. grated lemon rind
1/2 tsp. cinnamon
1/4 tsp. salt
2 tbsp. butter

Mix all ingredients together except butter. Pour into a pie tin, either greased or containing a pie crust. Bake 40 minutes at 400°F. Top with butter, cool, and serve.

Whole-Wheat Green Tomato Muffins

1 cup flour
1 cup whole wheat flour
1 tbsp. baking powder
1/2 tsp. salt
1 egg, beaten
1/4 cup vegetable oil
3/4 cup milk
1 cup green tomatoes, minced
1/4 chopped walnuts

Combine the two flours, baking powder, and salt in a large mixing bowl. Make a well and pour all the wet ingredients (except tomatoes) and mix until flour is moistened. Gently add minced green tomatoes and walnuts. Mixture should be lumpy. Grease muffin cups or line with paper liners. Fill each cup 2/3 full and bake in a 400°F oven for 25 minutes. Cool and serve.



A Hot Plant for Winter Chill

As frost and cooler temperatures spell the end of the outdoor flowers, it's time to plan your indoor garden. Longwood Gardens in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania is always a source of ideas and inspiration. There, in the East Conservatory, at the entrance to the Children's Garden, is an unusual and eye-catching possibility: *Manettia luteorubra* (syn. *M. inflata*), commonly called twining firecracker.

With dark green leaves and reddish orange flowers tipped with yellow, this energetic climber is virtually exploding with color. The slender, tubular blossoms resemble lit firecrackers or Halloween candy corn—hence its other common name, candy-corn vine. Section gardener Mary Allinson says, "It's a happy and relatively tough little plant that blooms almost continuously."

Native to South America, twining firecracker is a dynamite indoor plant for our area. It does well in a hanging basket or in a container, where it can ascend a small tepee or trellis. Byron Martin, president of Logee's Greenhouses in Danielson, Connecticut, notes that the vine can be trained into a wreath or will happily trail along a windowsill. He says, "It's a great plant that makes a big ball of color."

Position the plant in a west- or south-facing window, where it will receive direct light. Maintain a minimum indoor temperature of 60°F, and allow the soil to dry out between waterings. Apply a balanced fertilizer every two to four weeks or when the foliage becomes uniformly pale. Stimulated by shortening day length, twining firecracker begins to flower in autumn and blossoms continuously through late spring. Flowering slows in early summer, which is a good time to trim back and reshape the plant.

Twining firecracker has few pest problems. However, some leaves may intermittently show signs of edge burn or may die back. Not all plants experience these problems, and unattractive leaves can be easily removed to reveal plenty of healthy foliage. But no matter, the firecracker vine is a sure-fire way to thaw out your chilly winter blues.

—Debbie Moran

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FOR FALL PLANTING. If you're building a stone wall or patio this season, check out **Month-By-Month Gardening in Pennsylvania**. In the chapter on gardening in October, author **Liz Ball** recommends planting "sturdy, low-growing perennials such as moneywort and moss pinks that love excellent drainage of coarse, gravelly, or sandy soil. Tuck plants in the crevices..." And looking towards November, she creates a palette for a winter perennial garden containing hellebores, European ginger, arum, jack-in-the-pulpit, and other hardy stalwarts. For more seasonal tips, check out this highly useful softcover reference book. (Cool Springs Press, 368 pp., \$19.95).

A SPECIALTY BULB FOR SUMMER.

It may be fall, but if you're already thinking about next summer's garden, here's something new and different to consider: the **Peruvian daffodil** (*Hymenocallis × festalis* 'Zwanenburg', syn. *Ismene*) from Dutch Gardens. This dramatic tender bulb has unusually shaped white flowers with spider-like petals, hence its other common name, the spider lily. It prefers a sunny location and does well in pots. Bulbs must be taken up during the winter in Zones 4-7. (www.dutchgardens.com, 800-818-3861)





First Time at the *Flower Show*

Lessons for Entering the Philadelphia Flower Show

Story by Beverly Fitts

“**M**ine are just as good as these,” thought 12-year-old Matt Walker-Drennan as he studied the cactus entries in the 2000 Philadelphia Flower Show. “It would be fun to enter.” That thought began Matt’s prize-winning adventure in the “Horticourt,” the area of the show where anyone can enter his or her favorite plants. Matt’s first experience getting his plants ready, entering, and re-entering demonstrates just how easy and enjoyable exhibiting at the Philadelphia Flower Show can be.



Ribbon-winner Matt Walker-Drennan with his prize cacti.

The old-man cactus had won a blue ribbon, the golden-column cactus took third place, and the *Mammillaria* an honorable mention.

"Mom was flipping out, but I just said, 'Yeah, that's cool.'"

Pete Prown



GETTING READY

About a month before the 2001 Show, Matt reminded his mother, Carolyn Walker, that he wanted to enter his cacti. Knowing he would need some help, she suggested he call Walt Fisher, a neighbor who helps first-time exhibitors. Walt sent Matt the Show's free exhibitor's guide, known among veterans as the "Show schedule." (The booklet is sent to PHS members in September, but non-members can get one by calling PHS at 215-988-8800 or email: eefran@pennhort.org)

The guide arrived with paperclips marking several possible categories for Matt's cacti, and had all the directions needed to enter the show. Matt studied the guide carefully and decided which of the categories he would enter. Choosing the right class involves a bit of strategy, and this home-schooled boy chose wisely. He selected "Beginner's Luck" for his golden column cactus (*Weberbauerocereus johnsonii*), and a standard class for cacti in 4- to 6-inch pots for his *Mammillaria compressa*. The old-man cactus (*Cephalocereus senilis*) went into a new standard class for hairy succulents and cacti in pots under 8". "I wanted to enter a brand new class because it would be smaller," he said. It's easier to win ribbons in smaller classes.

Since one of the requirements of the Show is to have the plant's correct botanical name, Matt got books from the library and looked through them. "I found a match immediately for the old-man cactus and for the golden column, but I couldn't find a match for this guy right here. I knew it was a *Mammillaria*, but I didn't know what kind. So I just called it a species (sp.)."

As entry day approached, this plucky 12-year-old thought about the overall appearance of his plants. He knew something had to be done about the unsightly build-up of salts on the outside of the pots. "Walt Fisher told me to rub them with coarse sandpaper," he recalls. "Then he told me to

put some vegetable oil on a towel and wipe the pots to give them a little shine."

Matt also removed a top dressing of sand from one of the pots and substituted small pebbles; pebbles won't wash out when the plant is watered. Noticing that the beard on the old-man cactus was untidy, he gently combed all the hairs in one direction. The plants were looking good, and Matt was almost ready for the Show.

The night before the Show, Matt and his mother put the plants in a cardboard box, and stuffed newspaper between the pots to keep them from falling over. For each plant Matt filled out two 4x6 entry cards with his name, address and phone number on one side, and the class number and botanical name of the plant on the other. Now they were ready for the drive down to the Show the following morning.

OPENING DAY

As they approached the Convention Center, Matt recalls, "Mom didn't know how to get into D Hall," (the parking area for exhibitors). "So we drove around a while, then had to wait for the freight elevator. But when we finally got to the Show floor, everyone was really nice to me."

As soon as Matt got off the elevator, he went to the post-entry table to register. Since he had groomed his plants thoroughly the day before, he didn't use the grooming table provided for last minute spruce-ups. Instead, he took his plants and entry cards directly to the Passers.

Passers are knowledgeable volunteers who see that you conform to the schedule, and have done everything possible to make your plant look its very best. They're full of helpful hints. Since Matt had done such a thorough job grooming his plants at home, passing was quick and easy. A little red "P" was placed in the corner of his entry cards, and that was the last time Matt could touch his plants until after judging.

Horticultural judges use a point system

for categories such as: cultural perfection, floriferousness, foliage, maturity, form, rarity, and grooming. Since judging is a difficult job that can take some time, Matt and his mother went to the Reading Terminal Market for an Amish breakfast. When they

Below: Grooming the old-man cactus (*Cephalocereus senilis*)
Far Left: The golden column (*Weberbauerocereus johnsonii*)



Beverly Fitts

First Time at the *Flower Show*

Tips From Top Blue-Ribbon Winners

Walt Fisher: Remove a build up of salts from your pot with sandpaper or use a wet 3M-type scouring pad.

Sylvia Lin: Groom properly. Remove any foliage that is marred or scarred. Add fresh top soil or use a top dressing of small stones. Make the plant look as pretty as possible.

Lee Raden: To grow the plant well, research the native habitat and recreate the climate. If necessary, use the McLean Library or call "Ask a Gardener" at PHS [215-988-8777, email: askagardener@pennhort.org]

Ray Rogers: Judges look for uniformity. Uniformity depends on a plant's balance of flowers and/or foliage. If there's too much on one side, even things up. Don't be afraid to prune.

Rosemarie Vassalluzzo: Early preparation is important. Read the schedule carefully and check the pot size.

Extra Tip: Pre-entering makes getting to the Show much easier. If you complete and send the entry form in the Show schedule to PHS by the February 1 deadline, you'll receive directions, a pass to D Hall (where Competitive Class exhibitors can park to drop off their plants), a Show ticket or entry button, and the right to enter as many plants as you like. There is no penalty for bringing in fewer plants than pre-entered, and you can still post-enter up to three additional plants each day of the Show.

returned to the so-called Horticourt (where plants are entered, versus the creative "Artistic class" sections), Matt approached his entries and shouted joyously, "Whoa!" The old-man cactus had won a blue ribbon, the golden-column cactus took third place, and the *Mammillaria* an honorable mention. "Mom was flipping out, but I just said, 'Yeah, that's cool.'"

SECOND AND THIRD JUDGING DAYS

Matt won three ribbons on opening day: a blue, a yellow and a white. Flushed with success, he re-entered the same three plants on Tuesday and again on Friday in different classes. The process of entering, grooming, and passing had to be repeated, but it was definitely worth it. "I got prizes every time."

By closing day, 12-year-old Matt Walker-Drennan, a first-time exhibitor, had won

seven ribbons in the world's largest indoor flower show: one blue, two yellow and four white. If you have a plant that is your pride and joy, let Matt be your inspiration. Enter it. You don't have to be a member of a garden club or a horticultural organization. Anyone can enter...and win.

Will Matt enter the Philadelphia Flower Show again? "Yes, definitely! I want to enter *all* my cactuses next year," he quips about his collection of 28 plants. "It was fun—just really, really fun." ☐

If you want to enter the Show but, like Matt, need some help, call the chairpersons of the Horticulture Classes listed in the *Exhibitor's Guide*. They are eager to answer any questions, and have a committee to help first-time exhibitors. There's also a workshop for new exhibitors at noon on February 2, 2002 at PHS. For more information, call (215) 988-8821 or email jkeogh@pennhort.org

Matt and his Mom heading home.



Walt Fisher

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Rubens Peale's Plant



A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE PELARGONIUM

Story by Pete Prown

As you stroll through the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., you may suddenly stop short and gaze in wonder at the masterful oil painting, *Rubens Peale with a Geranium*. It was painted in 1801 by Rembrandt Peale who, like the sitter, was a son of the esteemed Philadelphia painter, naturalist, and museum founder Charles Willson Peale. It is an elegant portrait of the artist's horticulture-loving brother with his prized plant. In fact, Rubens is so fond of the plant that he is depicted actually feeling the soil with his right hand, perhaps to test its moisture. It creates the sense that man and plant are connected in an almost spiritual way and, as such, resonates with many of us gardeners.

Top:

A modern
pelargonium
hybrid,
'Vancouver
Centennial'



Bottom:

A true
geranium (or
cranesbill),
Geranium
'Johnson's
Blue'.



Still, most gardeners with a basic knowledge of horticulture can look at this oil painting and mutter knowingly, "Well, it's not *really* a geranium. It's a *Pelargonium*." Indeed, pelargoniums have been called "geraniums" for centuries, even though they were classified into the *Pelargonium* genus in the late 18th century. What is the difference between the two plants? Among other distinctions, the true geranium, or crane's bill, is a hardy perennial whose flower has five equally arranged petals. In contrast, the pelargonium is a tender perennial whose blossom is divided into sets of two upper petals and three lower ones (see photos at left).

One might think that the differing characteristics of these two genera would have been sorted out decades ago, but old habits die hard and certain antiquated conventions of botanical Latin are harder still to change. Every spring, you can travel from nursery to nursery and see endless shelves of bright red, pink, and white "geraniums" for sale. How did this predicament over the classification of pelargoniums survive for over 200 years? For that we must look back to the early days of east-west trade, plant collecting, and the development of botanical Latin, the nomenclature we use for classifying plants.

The Pelargonium Discovered

The introduction of pelargoniums coincided with the rise of trade between Europe and the East at the beginning of the 17th century. Using the Cape of Good Hope at the tip of South Africa as a resting point, ocean-going traders from England, Holland, and Portugal would venture to India and beyond to bring exotic goods back to Europe. While staying in South Africa, these same traders took notice of the local flora and found pelargoniums growing wild in the warm, Mediterranean-type climate. As plants and seeds trickled back to Europe, a new trade niche was developed.

The key to the confusion between

pelargoniums and geraniums stems from 17th-century plant nomenclature, in which the former was simply lumped in with the latter. For example, the first written reference to a pelargonium is in the 1633 version of Gerard's *Herbal*. The actual plant is *Pelargonium triste*, but was labeled at the time as "Geranium Indicum Noctu Odoratum." Here, the Latin alludes to it being a plant with a nocturnal fragrance and, erroneously, from India. As noted in Diana Miller's book *Pelargoniums*, this plant was inadvertently thought to be from India for nearly a century, since it first arrived in Europe on a ship from the East. And so the confusion began.

The Genus of the Thing: Linnaeus vs. L'Heritier

The classification of pelargoniums improved somewhat in the 1700s, as more plants were introduced and more horticultural reference books were published. But it was still an uphill battle to create a universal name for the genus, as botanists of the day frequently contradicted each other in print.

Exacerbating the confusion were the writings of Swedish botanist Linnaeus, the father of plant taxonomy. In his influential reference book of 1753, *Species Plantarum*, he simply did not separate pelargoniums and geraniums into two distinct genera. This is a crucial moment, as Linnaeus' book became the veritable "bible" for botanical reference during the ensuing decades. In that light, one can see how the error was compounded to the point where the truth seemed superfluous.

Although the name *Pelargonium* had been used as early as the 1730s—an event apparently overlooked or ignored by Linnaeus—the French botanist Charles-Louis L'Heritier de Brutelle is considered the real father of the genus. In the late 1780s, L'Heritier redefined the group as pelargoniums, and his work was eventually published in a folio of engravings called *Geraniologia*, as well as in Aiton's *Hortus*

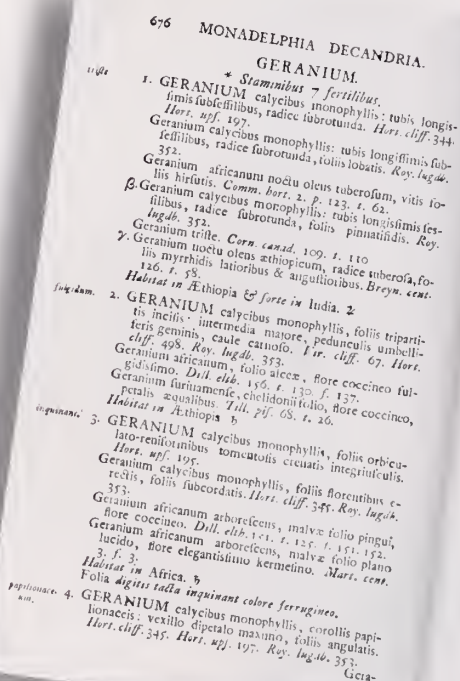
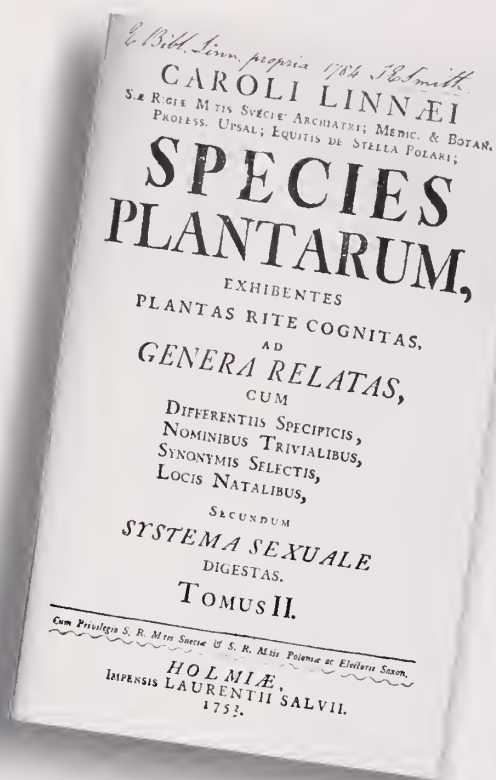
So what is a *genus*, you may wonder? It is part of the language of plant classification, known generally as "nomenclature." The reason why many plants are classified using a system of botanical Latin names is that: A) it is universally understood (versus it all being in English or in German, etc.), and B) it can be extremely specific (as opposed to using vague common names like "foxgloves" or "boxwood").

While there are several levels of classification, for the most part, you'll run into just three terms: the **genus**, **species**, and **cultivar**. For the sake of simplicity, try thinking of automobiles. If you refer to a certain car as a Ford, that would be the genus—the broad group of automobiles you're trying to describe. But which Ford? To get a clearer identity, you could say it's the Ford Mustang. The Mustang is the species. And to get really precise, you can call it the Ford Mustang 'Two-Door Convertible' model. We could say this is its cultivar name because now you are referring to one single type of automobile that can't be confused with any *other* Ford Mustang, such as a non-convertible model—that would be a different cultivar. In very basic terms, that's the essence of nomenclature.

For plants, it's the same approach, but here, each level also describes its parentage. For example, take the deep-pink bee balm, *Monarda didyma* 'Marshall's Delight'. *Monarda* is the broad genus, while *didyma* is the species—i.e., the specific type of monarda you'll find growing in the wild. Finally, the term 'Marshall's Delight' refers to the cultivar, which is the man-made hybrid cultivated from the wild plant, *Monarda didyma*.

Just about any general gardening book will include more information on nomenclature basics. You can also find a good illustrated explanation on page 11 of the popular reference book, *A-Z Encyclopedia of Garden Plants* (DK Publishing). Indeed, once you get the hang of it, Latin nomenclature can become a gardener's best friend.

—PP



Kewensis, a catalog of plants then being grown in the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew in London. While this accurately established pelargoniums as a unique entity, it was another story to convince fellow botanists who already subscribed to Linnaeus' methods.

As a result of Linnaeus' pervasive influence, the plant's true name was either obscured or outright rejected throughout the early decades of the 19th century, even in scholarly books of the time. It was only in the 20th century that botanists began correctly identifying the two plants. Nevertheless, by virtue of misidentification, personal whim, and perhaps a dash of botanical ego, the name "pelargonium" remains largely lost on the plant-

buying public to this day, being relegated instead to the pages of scholarly texts and other publications for serious gardeners.

Captured on Canvas

Painted in Philadelphia before the two brothers set off on a trip to London, Rembrandt Peale's painting "Rubens Peale with a Geranium" is a sophisticated work that depicts our city as a cultural mecca for the new nation, brimming with horticulture, science, and the arts. They were apparently taking the painting overseas to show it at the Royal Academy (although the main goal of the brothers' venture was to exhibit a complete mastodon skeleton to the English public, in essence, continuing their

father's museum work overseas).

Of special interest to us is the actual plant seen in the painting. Yes, the genus to which it belongs is *Pelargonium*...but the crucial question is, *which pelargonium species is it?* For that we turn to expert Faye Brawner, who provides us with a definitive answer: “It is surely *Pelargonium inquinans*. The plant is a species brought from South Africa and grown in England as a garden plant in the early 18th century. It and *P. zonale* are thought to be the principal ancestors of modern hybrids, but *P. inquinans* is supposed to be responsible for the first race of what is known as ‘the scarlet pelargoniums.’ It was also called ‘the staining flower’ as its petals will impart a red color when it is moistened—in its early days in Europe, some ladies even used it to dab color to their lips and cheeks.”

According to *Hortus Kewensis*, the plant was known to have been in cultivation as early as 1714 in the garden of Bishop Compton, a botany-loving cleric living in London. As for its physical characteristics, Brawner notes, “*P. inquinans* is a tall, rangy plant, as is evident from the painting. Mine sometimes grows to 6 or 7 feet tall before I have to chop it back. In its native habitat, it grew in competition with various shrubs so it evolved into a tall plant that could grow its way up through the shrubby growth to reach sunlight. This is why almost all the old hybrids are tall if not pruned. Interestingly, hybridizers have spent years trying to breed this trait out of modern cultivars and produce a low, compact plant for the mass market. But I do have a *P. inquinans*, as I wanted one of the plants that started it all for us gardeners who love pelargoniums.”

Pelargoniums Today

As for the Peale brothers, we can forgive them their horticultural error, as the *Pelargonium* was only classified a dozen or



Pelargonium inquinans

so years before Rembrandt Peale completed his well-known painting and the term was hardly integrated into the botanical language of the day. Furthermore, a sampling of scholarly texts on Charles Willson Peale reveals that he was a fervent disciple of Linnaeus, and this bias likely trickled down to Rembrandt and Rubens (this, not to mention the name of their younger brother, Charles *Linnaeus* Peale). Interestingly, as there was an active interchange of scientific information between Philadelphia and Paris during this period, the Peales were likely well aware of L'Heritier's classification of pelargoniums. But as was common at the time, they simply followed Linnaeus.

Still, as the pelargonium was officially classified over 200 years ago, the rest of us should perhaps know better. What common name should we call it? Since the hardy geranium's common name is "crane's bill" and that of its fellow-family member, *Erodium*, is "heron's bill," the pelargonium should by all rights follow suit. Alice M. Coates notes in her well-known book, *Flowers and their Histories*, that the pelargonium's true common name is "stork's bill," since its name is derived from the Greek word *pelargos*, which literally means "stork."

Of course, the chances of this change taking real effect is remote. Today, the name "geranium" is so entrenched in the public's mind that attempting to correct the error in nurseries would seem a case of marketing suicide. To compound matters, the confusion even reigns in modern horticulture texts. If you leaf through the Royal Horticultural Society's respected *Index of Garden Plants* or the American Horticultural Society's *A-Z Encyclopedia of Garden Plants*, each lists the common name for *Geranium* as "crane's bill" and the common name for *Pelargonium* as, you guessed it... "geranium."

Ah, the foibles of human nature and language. If nothing else, we can at least still talk to our plants. ☐

Grateful thanks for research assistance to the following: Staff members of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society and its McLean Library; the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia; the National Gallery of Art; and Amy Meyers of the Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens in San Marino, California. Also notable thanks to Faye Brawner of Deerwood Geraniums (304-472-4203, email: fbrawnerwv@aol.com).

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(* = available in PHS McLean Library)



Darrel Apps

Above: The Chinese trumpet creeper *Campsis grandiflora* 'Morning Calm'.

Right: A close-up of the *Physocarpus* leaf.



Darrel Apps

GREAT Woodies for your GARDEN

The 2002 Gold Medal Plant
Award Winners

Story by Joe Gray

T

his year's Gold Medal Plant Award selections comprise a very diverse group of characters, including a tough, deer-resistant boxwood; a spectacular non-invasive trumpet flower; a lovely disease-resistant crabapple, and a deep purple-leaved cultivar from a venerable old shrub.

These woody plants made the final cut from a multitude of applicants. They have been through the horticultural "boot camp" of the Gold Medal Committee and have emerged as the class of 2002. Better still, we know the descriptions of these four Gold Medal gems will encourage you to try them in your garden.

BUXUS SEMPERVIRENS 'VARDAR VALLEY'

(boxwood)

Type: Shrub

Light: Full to part sun

Soil: Well-drained, alkaline

Culture: Prune in early spring; easily transplanted

Height: 3 feet high by 5 feet wide

Found growing in the Vardar Valley of the Balkans in 1935, this low-growing and extremely dense boxwood is tough and very cold hardy, tolerating temperatures through Zone 5 (-10°F to -20°F). Its blue-gray foliage color lasts through the winter and the plants are not attractive to deer on their "midnight refrigerator runs." Because of its attractive mounding form, 'Vardar Valley' is a useful foundation shrub or edge-of-the-border landscape plant. This tough, durable shrub looks great when used in combination with dwarf conifers in a rock garden setting.

While 'Vardar Valley' adapts to poor soils, it performs best in well-drained situations. It prefers full sun, but will tolerate light shade. There are no serious insect or disease problems that affect this selection. Indeed, because of its beautiful mounding form, dark green foliage, deer resistance, cold hardiness and overall adaptability, 'Vardar Valley' is an exceptional landscape shrub for the garden.

CAMPSIS GRANDIFLORA 'MORNING CALM'

(Chinese trumpet creeper)

Type: Vine

Light: Sun

Soil: Any soil, very adaptable

Culture: Prune in spring to desired height and shape

Height: 15 feet high by 15 feet wide

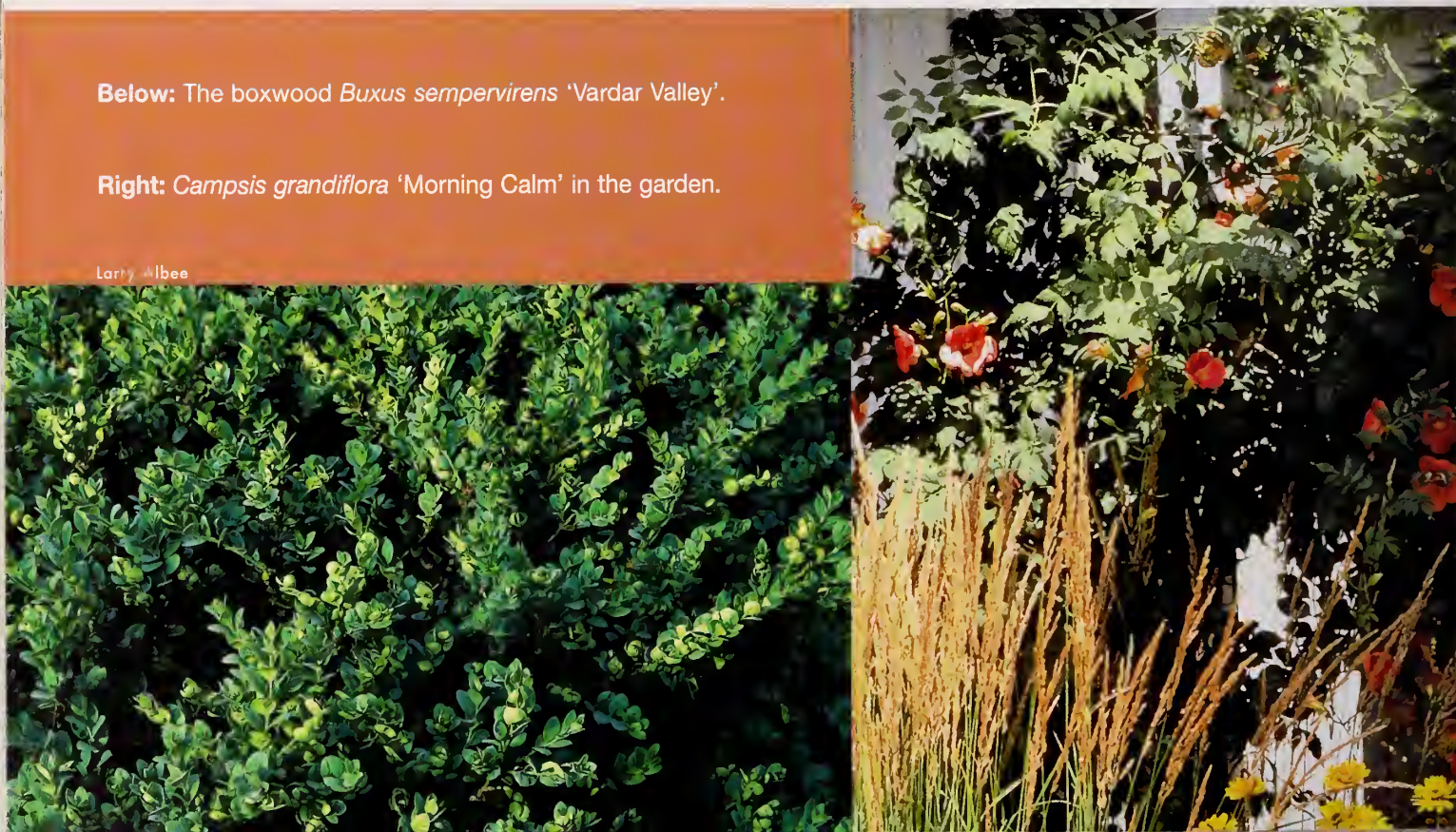
This exceptional Chinese trumpet vine was first noticed on Anmyon Island in Korea by Barry Yinger and subsequently collected by a team from the United States National Arboretum, including Yinger, J.C. Raulston, Sylvester March, and Dr. Darrell Apps. Its 4-inch, bowl-shaped flowers start blooming in mid-July for a four-to-six-week period and are borne in pendulous clusters of 10-14 flowers, which collectively can produce an intense 4-foot display of color that is stunning in appearance. The flowers display a glowing orange color with a yellow interior and red veins.

Campsis grandiflora hardiness typically runs from the edge of Zone 7 (0-10°F) to Zone 8 (10-20°F) in its true native range of mainland China. However, the selections made in Korea are a strain that has adapted to a colder climate, more in line with a Zone 6 tolerance (0 to -10°F). This increased hardiness will enable more gardeners to fully appreciate the benefits of this remarkable vine.

Below: The boxwood *Buxus sempervirens* 'Vardar Valley'.

Right: *Campsis grandiflora* 'Morning Calm' in the garden.

Larry Albee



The other species of *Campsis* include our native *Campsis radicans* and the hybrid *Campsis* × *tagliabuana*, which is a cross between *C. radicans* and *C. grandiflora*. The native *C. radicans* is a very aggressive, self-clinging vine that will take over house and home and is prone to suckering. In contrast, *Campsis* 'Morning Calm' is not aggressive and is determinate in its growth (i.e., it will only grow to a certain height and no further). It grows about 10-15 feet high and then begins to bush out and cascade down in growth—a very desirable trait in most suburban gardens. This is an unusual situation where an Asian plant introduced to American gardens is less aggressive and more appropriate than its American counterpart. In addition, the flowers of *Campsis grandiflora* 'Morning Calm' are twice the diameter of the native species and other *Campsis* hybrids.

'Morning Calm' tolerates poor soils and a wide range of soil pH conditions. Full sun is preferred for maximum flower production. There are no serious disease or insect problems that plague this plant.

MALUS 'ADIRONDACK'

(crabapple)

Type: Tree

Light: Sun

Soil: Moist, well-drained and acid

Culture: Prune in spring; self-pollinating

Height: 18 feet high by 15 feet wide

As cold and opinionated as this may sound, there are too many crabapples in this world. Indeed, if you go to a good bookstore and browse through some gardening books, you'll find a staggering number of crabapples. Now, it wouldn't be so bad if there were real differences between the cultivars, or if they actually were disease resistant or flowered consistently every year. The real problem is that there are too many bad ones in nurseries, and it's hard to separate the wheat from the chaff, so to speak. *Malus* 'Adirondack', however, is the real deal.

Bred and introduced by the late Dr. Donald Egolf of the United States National Arboretum, *Malus* 'Adirondack' quite simply has it all. I had the pleasure of knowing Dr. Egolf. One day, as we walked through the Arboretum, he noted what a remarkable tree 'Adirondack' was and how he felt it was the best selection in his breeding program. And he was right.

Malus 'Adirondack' has a narrow, upright form with leathery, dark green leaves. The flowers are carmine red in bud, changing to a lighter red, and finally opening up to white with traces of red in the flower. The flowers have a heavy texture and a slight fragrance. The tree's hard, orange-red fruit, classified as a "pome," is produced in great quantities. It persists into early winter and,



Below: *Malus* 'Adirondack' in its full autumn glory.

US National Arboretum





Phil Normandy

Above: The crabapple *Malus* 'Adirondack' in spring.

when softened by a hard freeze, provides food for birds.

Now, on to the topic of disease resistance. To breed 'Adirondack', 500 open-pollinated seedlings of *Malus halliana* were artificially inoculated with the disease known as fireblight under controlled conditions. Sixty open-pollinated seedlings (i.e., their pollination was not controlled) survived and showed further resistance to natural occurrences of scab, cedar apple rust and powdery mildew for a period of 11 years. *Malus* 'Adirondack' was then chosen from the remaining seedling populations. Now *that's* highly disease resistant.

In all, *Malus* 'Adirondack' makes a fantastic specimen small tree for small yards or at the edge of a foundation planting. It adapts to poor soil and prefers full sun.

PHYSOCARPUS OPULIFOLIUS 'DIABLO' **DIABOLO™**

(Eastern ninebark)

Type: Shrub

Light: Full to part sun

Soil: Any soil, very adaptable

Culture: Prune in early spring to desired height and shape

Height: 5-to-10 feet high and wide

Physocarpus 'Diablo' (also called Diabolo) is a recent European-bred introduction of the old-fashioned favorite, Eastern ninebark. Unlike its plain, green-foliaged relation, it is adorned with intense dark purple foliage and light pink buds that open to creamy white. From May to June, these flowers make a stunning contrast to the dark foliage, particularly if used in mass plantings in the garden. 'Diablo' makes an excellent border shrub and is suitable for use as a hedge or low screen.

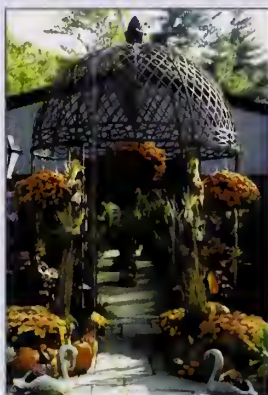
This deciduous, multi-stemmed shrub prefers full sun and tolerates poor soil conditions. In excessive summer heat, or half sun/half shade conditions, the leaves will fade to green with hints of purple undertones. *Physocarpus* 'Diablo' is vigorous and hardy to Zone 2. Beautiful and tough—what more could you ask for in a woody plant? 🌳

Joe Gray is the general manager of Hines Nurseries, located in Vacaville and Winters, California. He is also a member of the Gold Medal committee.

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Luo Wen Red

GROWING Woody Plants in CONTAINERS

By Patricia Schrieber

Growing woody plants in containers offers endless possibilities to the passionate gardener who has limited garden space or just a yen to try something different. But container gardening has its challenges, too, often the same ones faced by urban gardeners every day. Extremes in temperature, more rapid desiccation, and less room for root growth can all put stress on containerized plants—and on the most talented of gardeners, wherever they live.

We recently talked to several professionals willing to share their expertise: Andrew Bunting, curator at Scott Arboretum and owner of Fine Garden Creations; Gretchen Trefny and Nancy O'Donnell, project managers with PHS's Philadelphia Green program; and Blanche Epps, a community gardener from West Philadelphia. Gretchen, Nancy and Andrew have created attractive sidewalk displays in Center City Philadelphia's glass-and-steel "canyons," where plants must deal with higher temperatures in summer and increased wind velocities in winter. Blanche experiments with edible landscaping in her more protected West Philadelphia backyard.

When deciding on the size and type of containers to use, Gretchen explains that a larger container offers more winter protection, because the more soil that surrounds the roots, the better the insulation. When PHS put four large, cedar planters on the Arch Street side of its headquarters almost five years ago, Nancy suggested lining the planters with plastic lumber for better insulation. The lumber was carefully placed, allowing excess water to drain out the bottom. Since then, woody plants have weathered well there each winter.

For Center City planters, our experts prefer Pro-Grow PX-3, a lightweight soil mix that retains water and includes peanut shells rather than peat moss. When peat moss dries out, it forms a hard crust and is difficult to moisten again.

Once you have the right container and soil, what should you grow? Andrew selects plants with the following criteria in mind: each plant must look good in a number of seasons, have ornamental stems in winter,

and be "as tough as nails." Deciduous plants do better than evergreens, especially broad-leaved ones. Gretchen cautions that if gardeners feel they must grow evergreens, they should apply an anti-desiccant spray. Nancy stresses the importance of obtaining accurate information about the winter hardiness of specific cultivars, and she suggests placing containers out of the wind in a sunny spot during the winter months.

Andrew's plant list includes euonymus, juniper, false cypress, dogwood, and holly. He recommends the gold or silver forms of *Euonymus fortunei* such as 'Emerald 'n Gold' and 'Moon Shadow'. Gretchen warns that the leaves of euonymus dry out easily and fold up in colder weather. In summer, frequent watering of euonymus can help avoid damage by spider mites. Certain junipers (such as *Juniperus horizontalis* 'Bar Harbor', *J. squamata* 'Blue Star', and *J. procumbens* 'Nana') perform well in containers. The false cypress cultivars 'Filifera Aurea' and 'Golden Mop' (both *Chamaecyparis pisifera*) also look attractive year 'round.

Cultivars of red-stemmed dogwood (*Cornus stolonifera* 'Cardinal' and 'Silver and Gold') join yellow-stemmed dogwood (*C. sericea* 'Flaviramea') as woody plants with winter beauty. Hybrid blue holly (*Ilex meserveae*) has a number of cultivars, such as 'Blue Princess' and 'Blue Girl', which adapt well to container growing. Andrew studiously avoids a few plants for the most stressed situations, including heavenly bamboo (*Nandina domestica*), purple beautyberry (*Callicarpa dichotoma*), pieris (*Pieris japoni-*

ca), all the viburnums, and English ivy (*Hedera helix*).

Blanche has grown a variety of edible fruit trees, vines, and brambles in containers over the past six years. Her containers are better protected from drying winds and searing heat than those along Center City sidewalks. She uses reusable black plastic nursery pots, about 24 inches in diameter. She employs various soil mixes, too, depending on what's available at planting time. She has had great success with a white-fleshed peach tree (*Prunus persica* 'Georgia White'). Blanche also has a cherry tree (*Prunus 'Stella'*) growing in a 5-gallon bucket, which produces deliciously sweet fruit.

As for maintenance, container-grown woody plants require more frequent watering than in-ground gardens. Andrew suggests watering heavily at planting time, and then regularly through the growing season and into the fall before the soil freezes. Blanche waters her fruit trees frequently and on a daily basis during the hottest summer weather.

Finally, Nancy notes that gardeners should expect container-grown woody plants to have a more limited life span than those grown in the ground. Yet all four of our experts agree that growing woody plants in containers can be a gratifying horticultural experience, whether you live in the city ... or the country.

Patricia Schrieber is the outreach manager at PHS and can be seen each summer with TV anchorman Dave Roberts on Channel 6 Action News' weekly "Garden Tips."



Pete Prown

Below: Michael Dirr
Opposite page: *Acer triflorum*.



Story by Pamela Jacobsen

When there's a tree or other woody plant that needs identification, horticulturists and gardeners alike turn to Michael Dirr. His *Manual of Woody Landscape Plants* has sold over a quarter of a million copies and is now in its fifth edition. Dirr also co-authored *The Reference Manual of Woody Plant Propagation*, considered today to be the definitive guide. And Dirr's latest CD-ROM, *The Photo-Library of Woody Landscape Plants*, is well on its way to becoming an interactive horticultural classic.

Green Scene caught up with Dr. Dirr after a lecture at Amherst College in Massachusetts. He spoke to us about the best trees and shrubs for the Mid-Atlantic region, where hot, humid or dry summers and unpredictable winters demand a lot of adaptability from woody plants.

Dirr's TOP WOODY PLANTS for the

A large, dense tree with brilliant red autumn foliage dominates the center of the image. The leaves are a deep, saturated red, with some hints of orange and yellow. The tree's branches spread out in all directions, creating a thick canopy. In the background, other trees with green and yellowing leaves are visible, suggesting a park or wooded area. The ground is covered with fallen leaves, and a dark path or road is partially visible at the bottom. The overall scene is a beautiful representation of autumn in the Mid-Atlantic region.

e MID-ATLANTIC



Larry Albee



TOP WOODY PLANTS for the MID-ATLANTIC

TERRIFIC TREES

"Heat tolerance is a real issue in the Mid-Atlantic," says Dirr, "Fortunately, there are some wonderful heat-tolerant trees. For example, certain cultivars of sugar maple are great, such as 'October Red Glory', 'Legacy', and 'Commemoration'. And just about any oak is absolutely heat tolerant, including willow oak, scarlet oak, and white oak. The Chinese fringetree (*Chionanthus retusus*) is also unbelievably tough and will do well around Philadelphia.

"Certain maples are wonderful for the Mid-Atlantic, like *Acer mandschuricum*, *A. griseum*, and *A. triflorum*. For something unusual, try lace bark elm (*Ulmus parvifolia*). There are other new cultivars of elm, too: 'Allee', 'Athena', and 'Burgandy', all of which are amazingly drought tolerant and easy to transplant. Any holly will work—except for deciduous hollies like *Ilex verticillata*, which may need a bit more moisture and sun. Some of the best hollies are *Ilex* × *attenuata* 'Fosteri', *I. opaca*, *I. cornuta*, and moving farther south, *Ilex* 'Nellie R. Stevens'. In fact, I've seen 'Nellie R. Stevens' growing on the grounds of the White House.

"Specifically for the Philadelphia area," he continues, "I'd recommend any of the arborvitae, especially the eastern arborvitae (*Thuja occidentalis*) or western arborvitae (*T. plicata*). There's also a new *Thuja* called 'Green Giant', which is a PHS Gold Medal Plant Award winner. It has no disease or pest problems.

"Then there are spruces like the Serbian spruce (*Picea omorika*) and the Oriental spruce (*P. orientalis*)—those are absolutely great plants. The Swiss stone pine (*Pinus cembra*), the limber pine (*P. flexilis*), and western white pine (*P. monticola*) all have some merit for the Mid-Atlantic states—in fact, for pretty much the whole east coast from Virginia up into New England."

GREAT SHRUBS

No matter where you live, people are always looking for good shrubs because they add structure to the garden. They're also good for gardeners who don't have enough space for large trees. Dirr had a long mental list of great shrubs for the Delaware Valley.

"For deciduous shrubs," he says, "viburnums, across the board, are some of the

best everyday flowering shrubs for this region, tolerating drought, heat, and humidity. There are some particularly goods ones bred by researchers at the National Arboretum, like 'Seneca'. *Viburnum* 'Shoshoni' is a compact form of *Viburnum plicatum* f. *tomentosum*, a doublefile viburnum. 'Shasta' is a larger one. 'Mohawk' is one of the fragrant flower



**Opposite
top left:** *Acer griseum*

**Opposite
top right:** *Quercus alba*

Opposite Bottom:
Viburnum plicatum

Top right:
Picea orientalis

Right: *Thuja* 'Green
Giant'



Sheila Gmeiner

types, with waxy, maroon-red buds and a wonderful, almost Daphne-like fragrance. I can also recommend *Viburnum sieboldii*.

"And there have been a ton of new magnolias—both shrubs and small trees—like the 'Little Girl' series, also from the National Arboretum, including *Magnolia stellata*, *M. soulangiana*, and *M. loebneri*. For early flowering, forsythias and the fragrant winterhazels (*Corylopsis* sp.) are hard to beat."

A SURPRISE WINNER

There are many good sources of information on woody plants, including PHS's Gold Medal Plant Award program. But sometimes even experts like Dirr are sur-

prised by plants that perform much better than expected. "*Hydrangea quercifolia* 'Alice' presents an interesting story of how some lesser-known plants get into the trade," he explains. "This is an oakleaf hydrangea with flowers up to 14 inches long. I never thought it had a shot at commerce because it had such big flowers, was a floppy grower, and the parent plant was 10 to 12 feet tall.

"But 'Alice' ended up in a tissue-culture lab in Oregon called Microplant Nurseries. Microplant then sold rooted cuttings to Georgia growers, including McCorkel Nursery in Dearing, Georgia. The nursery's president Skeeter McCorkel called me up one day and asked, 'What's this plant

called 'Alice'?' And I said, 'You've got that? How'd you get that?'

"Surprisingly, Skeeter told me it's the most carefree *Hydrangea quercifolia* they'd ever seen. It grows fast in the container and doesn't die back. Now it's the biggest selling *H. quercifolia* in Zone 6 through 9, which covers most of the Mid-Atlantic. I could give you a bunch of other stories in the same vein, but 'Alice' is a pretty good reminder that sometimes you just have to give a plant a chance to prove itself in the garden." ☐

Based in Massachusetts, Pamela Jacobsen last wrote about unusual garden plants in the March 2000 issue.



DESIGNING WITH WOODY PLANTS

By Nancy Q. O'Donnell

Don't just think of woody plants as something to hide your home's foundation. They are major design tools that can be used in every aspect of the garden or landscape. Here are some ideas to help help you use woody plants artistically in the garden.

- Place winter- and early spring-blooming plants like wintersweet (*Chimonanthus praecox*), buttercup winterhazel (*Corylopsis pauciflora*) or cornelian cherry dogwood (*Cornus mas*) along a path you take every day in the winter. The haze of yellow blooms will escort you into spring. This is particularly effective with early minor bulbs such as *Crocus tommasinianus*.
- *Disanthus* (*Disanthus cercidifolius*) looks fabulous with fothergilla and witch-hazels in fall. *Disanthus* forms a dark purple and red background for the golden hues of its companions, making the entire ensemble glow.
- In the shade of tall trees, nothing gives more bang for the buck than hydrangeas. Try Gold Medal winners like 'Snow Queen', 'Blue Billow', or 'Annabelle'. This latter cultivar is a *Hydrangea arborescens* and, as such, should be cut back to 12 inches off the ground in late winter. This will allow it to flower heavily in the summer, even in heavy shade. ('Annabelle' also looks great when dried for winter arrangements. After you cut the shrub back in February or March, enjoy the naturally tawny guise of its flower heads or spray paint them silver or gold to use in festive, cold-weather decorations.)
- Many woody plants look beautiful without their flowers and foliage—sometimes their beautiful barks are enchantment enough. You can choose plants with peeling barks like birches or striped ones like moosewood (*Acer pensylvanicum*), or exfoliating ones like Japanese *Stewartia*.
- When's the best time to prune your flowering shrubs? When they are blooming, of course! Bring armloads of blossoms inside to enjoy in flower arrangements, either alone or mixed with herbaceous flowers.

Nancy O'Donnell is a project manager in PHS' Public Landscapes department.

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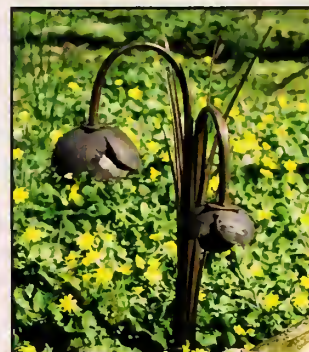
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SAVORING HERBS

Dried Herbs for Winter Cooking

Like many gardeners, I suffer withdrawal symptoms each fall as my fresh herbs begin to disappear from the garden. For me, one way to combat the winter doldrums is to create my own dried-herb blends. They turn ordinary dishes into something special and, more than that, the time I spend stocking my pantry with them seems a small investment during the cold days of January and

February. Also, I like knowing that my herbs contain no chemicals or other unhealthful additives.

Drying herbs for blends is a cinch. Harvest fresh herbs in the early morning after the dew has dried. Some experts say the best time to pick herbs is just before they come into bloom, but life is too complicated to worry about har-

vesting on a timetable. Take a nibble, and if the flavor is good, harvest away. But be gentle—the more leaves are bruised, the more oils are lost. Wash the herbs and lay them out on clean towels to dry. (The few herbs that don't dry easily—dill, fennel, cilantro—produce seeds that can be used instead.)

There are two simple methods for drying fresh herbs. First, you can hang them upside down by the stems in small bunches in a cool, dark place for two to three weeks, or until the leaves are dry and crumbly. If the area is dusty, put an inverted paper lunch bag over the top, leaving the bottom open for air circulation.

The other approach is to gently remove the leaves from the stems, place on a nonstick cookie sheet in a single layer and put them in a warm oven. Gas ovens with a pilot light provide enough heat. In gas ovens with no pilot light or in electric ovens, preheat the oven to 200°, then turn off the heat before putting in the herbs. This is important because, even on its lowest setting, an oven can burn your herbs, so again—make sure you turn it off. Fresh herbs will dry in a couple of hours to overnight. Large leaves like basil should be turned once; don't bother with tiny leaves like thyme.

Finally, store your newly dried herbs loosely in

glass jars away from light. You can also have fun creating your own special blends. The possibilities are endless. And with the holidays just around the corner, these homemade herb blends from your garden make wonderful gifts, too. To get you going, here are a few recipes that I like.

Bouquet Garni

- 1 Tbsp. dried parsley
- 1 tsp. dried thyme
- 1 pinch dried lovage (tastes like celery)
- 1 pinch of fennel seeds
- 1 dried bay leaf

Combine the dried herbs in a tea ball and use when making soup or simmering meats or vegetables (as in a stew). You can also bundle herbs in cheesecloth for a more traditional approach.

Insomniac's Bath

- 2 Tbsp. dried rosemary
- 1 Tbsp. dried basil

Combine rosemary and basil in a tea ball. Steep in hot water for 15 minutes to 1/2 hour. Strain and add to bath water. This soothing concoction cools the skin and calms the nerves.

Tea Blends

- 1 tea bag or a tea ball containing the loose tea of your choice
- 1 tsp. of the any of the herbs listed below:

Mix any of the following dried herbs with black or herb teas (or even by themselves) for new and unusual flavors: anise seed, bee balm, chamomile, fresh ginger, lemon balm, lemon verbena, peppermint, pineapple mint, pineapple sage, spearmint, dried orange peel, whole cinnamon stick or cloves. ☐

HERB SOURCES:

The Spice Terminal at the Reading Terminal Market,
11th & Arch Streets, Philadelphia, (215) 592-8555, www.readingterminalmarket.org

The Spice Corner in the Italian Market,
9th & Christian Streets, Philadelphia, (215) 925-1660

Penzeys (800) 741-7787, www.penzeys.com



Pete Prown



By Alexandra Basinski

ORGANIC MATTERS

Compost Rules

Compost is sacred stuff to organic gardeners. The result of an earthly alchemy, this rich brown goodness not only delivers a nutritionally complete meal to your tomatoes and tulips, it also prevents soil-borne plant diseases, fluffs clay-bound garden beds, adds body to sandy soils and conveniently recycles tons of yard and kitchen wastes headed for the dump. What's not to love?

Fall is the perfect time to start a new pile. Here's how: first, heap up some leaves. Second, wait three years. Believe me, it's that mindless. Compost happens with or without our tinkering. But if you want a higher quality compost in a shorter amount of time, it helps to know how the system works.

Small but mighty microbes do all the heavy chores in the compost pile. They secrete an array of enzymes able to digest any organic material they come across. Billions of these tiny bacteria, fungi and yeasts are on the scene already and, if you set out the wee welcome mat, they'll jump right in and get to work. Here's what they need:

Feed them a balanced diet. Our diminutive decomposers perform best with a roughly equal blend of dry "brown" things (like fall leaves, straw or wood chips) mixed with juicy "green" things (like grass clippings or kitchen scraps). Remember that chopped or shredded materials always break down quicker.

Give them a drink of water and some fresh air. Make your pile slightly moist but not too soggy, in order to keep the microbial party hopping. And then turn, poke or stir every week or so, as the most potent bacteria are aerobic types that need oxygen to thrive.

And a warm place to sleep. As the microbes munch away, they throw off heat that kills lurking plant pathogens and accelerates decay. Build a pile at least three feet square or use a bin to retain that heat for a faster and cleaner compost. You might even see some steam wisping off the top as you give it a turn on a frosty morning.

Bacteria aren't the only creatures that show up to this feast. Your pile may become a home to worms, beetles, ants, spiders, slugs and garter snakes. They all have a role in decomposition and won't interfere with the process. However, unless you want raccoons, skunks or the neighbor's dog to be part of the mix,

don't include meat and fish scraps, dairy products, oil or oily foods. Also, dog and cat poop, diseased plants and sawdust from treated lumber should not be included for health and safety reasons. Avoid weeds that have gone to seed because the seeds will sprout when you use the compost in your garden.

To start a simple fall pile, rake up your leaves and surround them with chicken wire to keep them from blowing. Or, splurge for one of the well-designed plastic or wooden bins for a tidier look. Mix in some old plants, pulled weeds, vegetable trimmings, grass clippings, coffee grounds, and tea bags to get



Rob Cardillo

things going. Give it a little sprinkling with water and turn with a pitchfork on occasion.

If the pile is reluctant to heat up, jump start it with some herbivore (cow, horse, chicken or rabbit) manure or commercially available compost starter. Finished compost looks like rich crumbly humus and, if you do it right, it's ready for your beds and containers in just a few weeks.

Remember, even if you don't follow all these guidelines, you'll still eventually get compost. But keep these rules in mind and you'll be producing a premium grade of that old black magic in no time at all. ☞

Rob Cardillo is a Pennsylvania-based garden writer and photographer. His work has appeared in *Better Homes and Gardens*, *Organic Gardening*, *Country Living Gardener* and many other publications.



By Rob Cardillo

BEGUILING BULBS

Miniature Daffodils All Spring Long

Nothing brings more joy to the spring garden than an exuberant display of flowering bulbs. After the subtle lavenders and whites and gaudy golds of species crocus have faded, mass plantings of miniature daffodils can produce a significant color impact in the small garden or in front of a perennial or shrub border. Miniature daffodils are just like their standard counterparts, except smaller. Planted 2 inches apart and 2 to 4 inches deep (depending on bulb size) in clumps of 6, 10, 25 or more, they shout, "Look at me!" Some are even fragrant. In a cool spring, individual flowers can remain in bloom for two weeks or more.

Miniatures are only one or two generations removed from the species. Depending on the native habitat of the species involved, some of them are more challenging to grow than standards. Standards have been developed over 10 or more generations, with those that perform well being selected at every opportunity. Early-season bulbs thrive and multiply in this area, whereas later-season cultivars are often not so reliable. The cultivars propagated and sold by Dutch sources are readily available and relatively inexpensive for mass planting. Those that dwindle can be replaced.

Early-season bulbs derived from species trumpets and from *Narcissus cyclamineus* are particularly well-adapted to this area. 'Little Beauty' (bicolored trumpet), 'Midget' (yellow trumpet), 'Mite' (yellow cyclamineus hybrid) and 'Tete-a-Tete' (multi-floreted cyclamineus hybrid) all thrive here and are among the earliest to bloom. Note that 'Tete-a-Tete', which can produce two or three blooms per scape when well grown, will dwindle to only one bloom per scape, especially if the clump is not dug every three or four years, separated and replanted using a low-nitrogen fertilizer. This vigorous cultivar literally exhausts nutrients in the soil and demands attention.

Mid-season cultivars are not all so reliable as the early ones. 'Hawera' (a pale yellow *N. triandrus* hybrid) is sold as a large bulb producing five to seven florets per scape. In time, the bulb becomes smaller and only exhibits two or three florets.

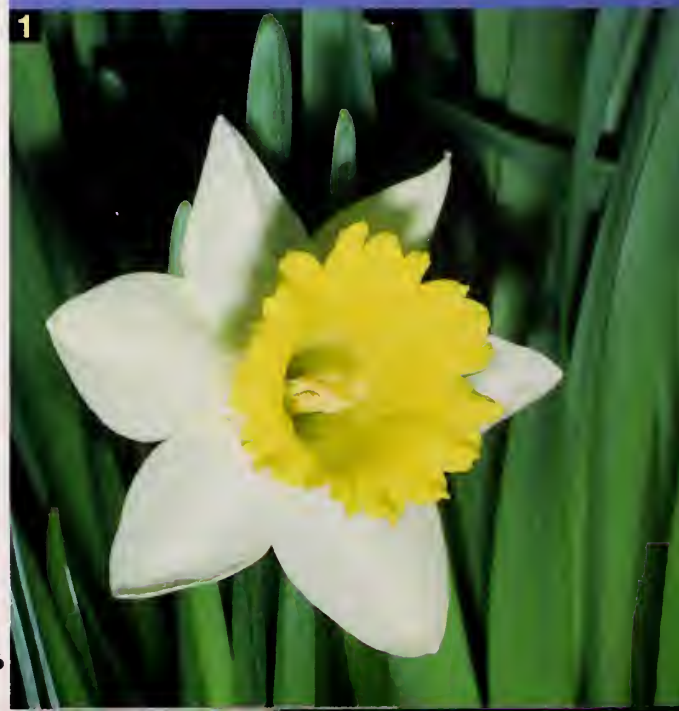
Perhaps a dry summer or cooler situation (deep mulch or dense overplanting) might reverse this trend. 'Jumblie' (a golden yellow cyclamineus hybrid and sibling of 'Tete-a-Tete'), can be massed for mid-season color. 'Jumblie' persists for years unattended, but does not appear to increase much, if at all. 'Segovia' (bicolored short cup) adds a pleasing touch of white and multiplies well.

'Sundial' (greenish-yellow *N. jonquilla* hybrid), usually has two fragrant florets per scape. It increases readily, but unfortunately can be wiped out by a very cold, wet winter.

Inexpensive and appealing is the very fragrant gold and white *N. tazetta* hybrid, 'Canaliculatus'. Golf-ball size bulbs are readily available from Dutch sources and produce exquisite, fragrant multi-floreted scapes the first year. Thereafter the bulbs divide and divide and divide into thin, non-blooming slabs. It has been suggested that the secret of reblooming lies in deep planting (9 to 12 inches) and a hot summer baking. Rather than look at masses of bloomless foliage, replace this cultivar annually.

'Sun Disc' is a very round, fragrant *N. jonquilla* hybrid opening all yellow and fading to yellow and white in the hot days of early May. 'April Tears' (yellow *N. triandrus* hybrid) is similar to 'Hawera' but two weeks later and more refined. It usually carries three or four florets per scape. 'Baby Moon' (bright yellow, multi-floreted *N. jonquilla* hybrid), a persistent grower, brings the miniature daffodil season to a fragrant end in mid-May. ☐

1. 'Little Beauty' 2. 'Midget' 3. 'Tete-a-Tete'
4. 'Hawera' 5. 'Jumblie' 6. 'Canaliculatus'
7. 'Sun Disc' 8. 'Baby Moon'



By Kathryn Andersen



2



3



4



6



7



8



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Pete Prown

Above: The mischievous Molly.
Left: Shady looking guilty.

DOG DAZE

What Happens When “Man’s Best Friend” Turns into your Garden’s Worst Enemy

Story by Jane Carroll

Being both a gardener and a dog lover can be quite a challenge. Just ask Philadelphia Flower Show vice-chair Midge Ingersoll, who shares her lovely garden in Moorestown, NJ with Molly, an 18-month-old Labrador retriever who eats azaleas for lunch. (She recently gobbled down an entire ‘Delaware Valley White’ azalea.)

“If it’s woody, she thinks it’s a stick to chew on,” says Midge. “I often find myself asking my husband, ‘Wasn’t there a shrub here?’” The 80-pound “puppy” was also fond of taking dips in the koi pond and romping around the kitchen garden, both of which are now protected with an electric fence. “Things are much saner with the fence,” Midge sighs.

Even mature, fully trained dogs can be hazardous to a garden’s health. One summer, PHS librarian Jane Alling could not figure out what manner of beast was eating her tomatoes off the vine, until she

caught her sweet-natured golden retriever with red juice dripping down her fur. It seems the pooch couldn’t distinguish between the red rubber ball she played fetch with and the ripe tomatoes, hanging at such a convenient height.

Shady, a mixed-breed beauty and frequent visitor to my own garden, is another example. A former stray, she never likes to be more than 2 feet away from whichever human is currently feeding

her. So when I was planting annuals among the groundcover in my front yard one day, she wasn’t content to watch from the sidelines. Trailing close behind me as I planted a Dusty Miller ‘Silver Lace’, her back paw deftly lopped it off at ground level. There was no point in scolding—it would only have bruised her fragile self-esteem, since she had no clue what she had done.

Fortunately, whether you live with a dog, or, like me, have frequent canine guests, there are ways to prevent garden tragedies before they happen, keeping your garden safe and your pet happy. Physical barriers like electric fences are certainly one solution. But with patience, most dogs can be trained to stay away from certain areas, especially if there is ample alternative space for playing and napping. Also, there are various repellents available, including natural substances like ground pepper. See the sources below for more information.

While sharing your garden with animals can sometimes give you “paws,” most dog lovers agree that the pleasures of canine companionship far outweigh the occasional damage. Indeed, what are best friends for? 🐾



Websites:

- www.petplanet.com
- www.inch.com/~dogs
(American Dog Trainers Network)
- www.dogproblems.com/gardendigging.htm

Books:

- *Backyard Battle Plan*, Cooper Rutledge (Penguin Books)
- *Bugs, Slugs & Other Thugs*, Rhonda Massingham Hart (Storey Comm.)

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If you're trying to make a super holiday arrangement—be it a wreath, centerpiece, or swag—look no further than your own backyard. In this story, Lorraine Kiefer tells us how, as she assembles lovely creations from foliage collected on peaceful winter walks. Grab your coat and scarf and let's head outside!

- 16** **New Monardas**
For those of us who love monardas but hate mildew, take heart. Here, Patricia A. Taylor introduces us to a variety of new "mildew resistant" monarda specimens. Better yet, they're beautiful and help attract butterflies, hummingbirds, and other flying wonders to your garden.

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Join Jane Carroll and John Gannon as they survey the great work Philadelphia Green performs throughout the City of Brotherly Love. From West Philly to Penn's Landing, the urban-greening program of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society has engaged communities all across our city to create a better and more livable place for all.

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Which are the best perennials for our Mid-Atlantic region? Pamela D. Jacobsen sat down with perennial guru Allan Armitage and picked his brain for the answers. From verbena to Virginia bluebells, here are some of Allan's best perennial bets for the Delaware Valley.

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A Book by the Fire

It's cold outside and the garden is barren. The bulbs you planted are sound asleep and next year's lavish annuals and tropicals are nothing but a distant dream. What's a gardener to do? Read.

This is the time of year to curl up by the fireplace and read a good gardening book. It can be a "how-to" tutorial that will prepare you for a major project next spring (building a water garden or digging that new perennial border), a wide-ranging reference book or a monograph on your favorite plant genus. It can be something more personal, perhaps an anecdotal collection of essays from your favorite garden author, be it Henry Mitchell (*The Essential Earthman*), Vita Sackville-West (*Some Flowers*), or Michael Pollan (*Second Nature, The Botany of Desire*), all of which are available in PHS's McLean Library.

When I grab a vintage favorite at this time of year, it's invariably Beverly Nichols' *Merry Hall* trilogy. Published in the 1950s, these semi-fictional accounts of a large garden restoration are among the wittiest books I've ever read, gardening or otherwise. Nichols isn't just funny — he's wickedly insightful, poking jibes at all the various personality "types" one runs into in the horticultural world. He created these characters by blending the personas of actual people he knew, some portrayed kindly and others...well, *less so*. But these tales are always amusing and have earned the late author a cult of followers who have a spot in their hearts for *Merry Hall*.

Now let's ask a few PHS members what they like to read. Horticulturist Liz Dailey notes that she "prefers informative books to those that are about individuals' personal feelings on nature and gardening. I bought *The Well-Tended Perennial Garden* by Tracy DiSabato-Aust as soon as it came out and have found it invaluable. It is well written and contains sound information about the cultural requirements of the plants, maintenance and how to prepare the beds. The photos are also very illustrative of her pruning methods."

Frequent library user Russ Strover says that "so many of the books in the Library are informative and entertaining that it is difficult for me to call just *one* my favorite. But certainly near the top of the list would be Jeff Cox's *Perennial All Stars*. Although restrict-

ed to 150 perennials, I find it an excellent reference book, often containing the answer to my question. Each choice is thoroughly described in a most entertaining fashion. As is my practice with new horticultural books, I borrowed *Perennial All Stars* from the Library and found it worthy of purchase. Often, when I have just a few minutes, I will select a plant and read the two pages that Jeff has written on it."

For member Kristin Swoszowski-Tran, one of her favorite books is *Designing with Plants* by Piet Oudolf and Noel Kingsbury. "I pour over many garden books throughout the year," she notes, "and this one is a consistent winner in terms of satisfying photos

and pertinent information regarding suitability and design. The plants are sometimes unusual, sometimes common, but always presented in a sensual, lush format. As a painter, I also appreciate the fact that Oudolf treats plants in terms of color, form, texture, and architectural significance. Terrific book!"

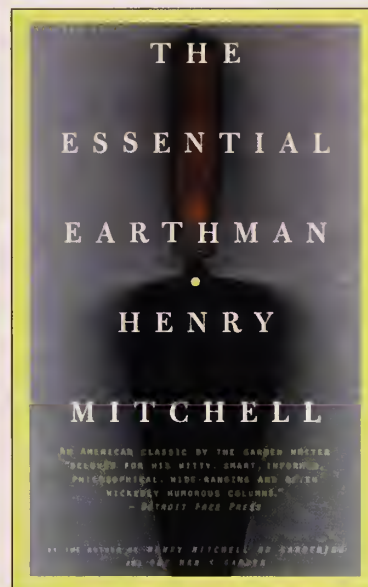
So what's your favorite book for winter reflection? If one doesn't come readily to mind, stop by the McLean Library at 20th & Arch Streets in

Philadelphia, or make a "virtual visit" at www.pennsylvaniahorticulturalandsociety.org, which contains a link to the library. There you can browse the online catalog for new titles, ask a gardening question or search the *Green Scene* article index. Members can also find out about getting books and videos at home using the Books-By-Mail Service. For more information, visit the website, or call (215) 988-8772.

So what are you waiting for? The chilly wind is picking up and that cozy nook by the fireplace is beckoning. Winter brings out the armchair gardener in all of us.

Pete Brown

email: greenscene@pennhort.org





Learning to Press Flowers

Pressing flowers is one of the simplest, yet most rewarding forms of garden art. Using a simple press, flowers can be flattened and dried, and then used in a myriad of creative ways, from artistic collages to naturalistic compositions of all kinds. One of the new leaders in this area is Janie Gross, a Philadelphia-area gardener and author of the acclaimed flower-pressing book, *The Afterlife of Flowers*. As she notes, once you learn the basics, your garden will become a giant palette from which you can pick materials for your next “pressed masterpiece.”



..... *Clematis* ‘Jackmanii’ blooms in the spring along the fence bordering Janie’s perennial garden. Janie refers to this as the “live” version of a flower. The first step to pressing is to cut the flower directly from the growing plant, preferably in the afternoon after all the morning dew has evaporated from the flower. Flower pressing teaches us about the structure of a flower.



..... The magnificent head of a fresh-cut clematis is ready for the flower press (top left). It is important to cut the stem as close to the base of the flower head as possible, being careful not to disassemble the petals. However, there are times when dissecting the flower’s architecture is desirable. The decision of how to present a particular flower in its “afterlife” is best determined at the moment of pressing, because once the flower is dried, it is more delicate to handle.



..... In this example, Janie demonstrates her love of observing each component of a flower. She carefully separates the individual petals and positions them on one page of her press, making sure there is space between each petal (no overlaps) to prevent the parts from sticking together.



The press Janie uses and provides for her students at Longwood Gardens (see below) is comprised of wood, polyester fiber-filled pads (sandwiches), cardboard, and a clever spring-bolt locking mechanism.

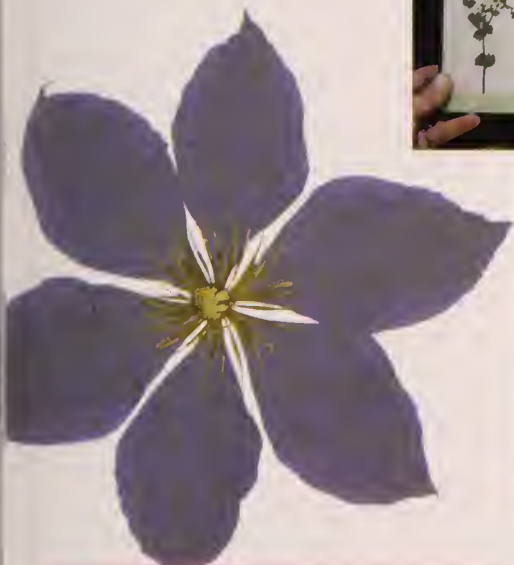
Once the 24 flower sandwiches are loaded, Janie patiently awaits the dramatic transformation from the live "multi-dimensional, complex structures" into the compressed, delicate forms."



Janie stores her labeled specimens in clear acetate pages; these are kept in the total darkness of a flat-file cabinet in her studio. These pressed flowers await their turn to become part of what Janie calls a "Pressed Arrangement." She tells her students to think of the pressed arrangement as they would a three-dimensional floral bouquet, considering the color, size and shape relationships that are the key elements in a successful design.



A simple pressed arrangement, using herbs and perennials, rice paper back-grounds, and ready-made frames.



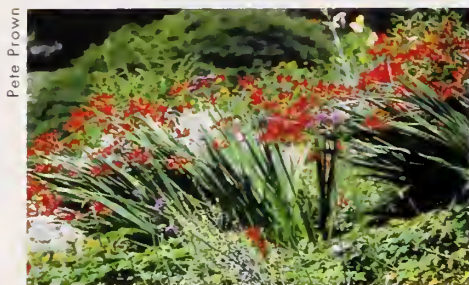
A composite pressed arrangement featuring each plant specimen in its own compartment of a ready-made frame. As shown in this example, Janie often embellishes her arrangements by hand-painting the frame to complement both the colors and rhythm of a particular design.

SOURCE

The flower presses mentioned in this article are available at the Longwood Gardens Gift Store in Kennett Square, PA, (610) 388-1000

The author of *The Afterlife of Flowers* (Running Press), available in stores, Janie Gross recently studied *oshibana* (Japanese flower pressing) in Japan under the master flower presser, Nobuo Sugino, becoming one of a few Americans who have studied these traditional methods. (Sugino has also been a blue-ribbon winner at the Philadelphia Flower Show.) Janie plans to share some of her newly acquired techniques and inspirations with her students at Longwood Gardens. Her classes will be held on Saturday, March 16, and Saturday, May 14, 2002. For more information, please contact the Continuing Education Department of Longwood Gardens at (610) 388-1000, x516.

Think *Crocosmia* for Summer Drama



which has fire-engine red flowers that are real hummingbird magnets (seen left and below).

A South Africa native crocosmia resembles its cousin, gladiolus, but is more refined with tall, sword-shaped leaves and freesia-like blossoms on arching stems. A well-growing clump may reach three to four feet, adding both height and freshness to the summer garden. Brent Heath, co-owner of Brent and Becky's Bulbs, says, "Its linear shape is an attractive contrast to mound-forming perennials."

In addition to the devilishly red 'Lucifer', there are many popular cultivars in what Heath calls "warm, happy, attention-getting colors." One of his favorites, 'Emberglow', has narrow, burnt-orange blossoms arranged in stair-stepped fashion on alternating sides of the stem. 'Emily McKenzie' has wide-open orange flowers with a splash of red and pale orange centers. The smaller-flowered 'George Davison' is a rich, golden yellow. For late summer sparkle, choose strong partners like ornamental grasses, rudbeckias, cannas, or dahlias.

Growing from bulb-like corms, crocosmia is happiest in full sun and well-drained, moist soil. While 'Lucifer' is usually reliable to Zone 5, most cultivars are hardy in Zones 6 through 9. All varieties dislike wet feet in winter. Plant corms in early spring at a depth of three to four times the size of the corm. Sprinkle bulb fertilizer on top of the soil, not in the planting hole, and mulch well.

When stressed by drought, crocosmia may be troubled by spider mites. Spray off insects with a blast of water, and remove any damaged leaves. You can also divide the clumps every two to three years to keep plants vigorous. Although crocosmia may not bloom the first year, this tropical beauty is worth waiting for.

-Debbie Moran

SOURCE

Brent and Becky's Bulbs

7463 Heath Trail
Gloucester, VA 23061
(877) 661-2852
www.brentandbeckysbulbs.com

Carroll Gardens

444 East Main Street
Westminster, MD 21157
(800) 638-6334
www.carrollgardens.com



CATCH A WAVE! One of the hottest annuals released in recent years, the "Wave" petunia has become a favorite for container and windowbox planting because of its heavy bloom and maintenance-free culture. Two new Wave petunias have just been recognized as **2002 AAS Flower Awards Winners**, Petunia F1 'Lavender Wave' and F1 'Tidal Wave Silver.' The first has a trailing habit (3 to 4 feet) and great garden performance with high botrytis resistance, not to mention its lovely lavender hue (pictured top).

The latter has silvery, white blooms with dark-purple centers (pictured bottom). Interestingly, gardeners can also determine this plant's ultimate height: if spaced closely together (around 6 inches), 'Tidal Wave Silver' can reach 2 to 3 feet high. If spaced a foot apart, it will reach 16 to 22 inches. And like other Wave varieties, neither requires pinching or pruning. Just water regularly and they will bloom like the dickens all summer long.

The Gardener's Bookshelf

by Julie A. Snell

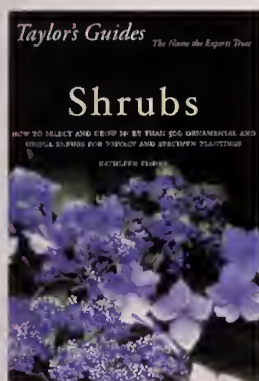
Taylor's Guide to Shrubs

By Kathleen Fisher (Houghton Mifflin, 441 pp., semi-hardcover, \$23.00)

Level: All levels.

Pros: Glossy photos, handy size, durable binding

Cons: None.

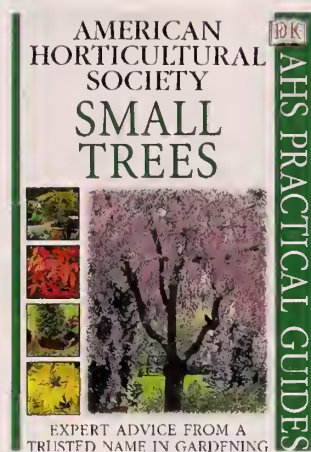


I dived into the long-awaited updated edition of this shrub guide as if it were the fall issue of *Vogue*, and I found almost as many glossy beauty shots as in the popular fashion maga-

zine. This edition profiles dozens of plant families featuring stellar “cover-girl” specimens. This time around, the author has arranged the photo section, known as the Gallery of Plants, in alphabetic order, which makes finding your favorite supermodel shrub a snap. Although the guide is not all-inclusive (which, to be fair, would make it way too heavy to take with you to the nursery), it includes new cultivars along with many old favorites.

Something new in this edition—and maybe more important than this season's hemline—is the inclusion of an invasive-plants list. But even if a shrub is on this list, it still gets the full treatment in the rest of the book, with only a brief mention that it is invasive in certain parts of the country. So, clearly, it's important to consult this list before buying and planting.

Finally, a note on the new format—I love it. The binding is much sturdier than the old Taylor guides and dimensions are more appealing; it just feels better in your hands, like a new pair of leather gloves. It's “just the thing” for the fall-planting season. I wouldn't dream of shopping for shrubs without it.



Small Trees: An American Horticultural Society Practical Guide

By Allen J. Coombes (Dorling Kindersley Publishing, 80 pp., semi-hardcover, \$8.95)

Level: Beginner to intermediate.

Pros: Good selection of trees

Cons: May be too brief

A little book on small trees, how *apropos*. Part of a color-coded series of garden guides by the American Horticultural Society, this book on trees most suitable for smallish landscapes has a little bit of everything.

The how-to sections are clear and easy to follow, although the section on making a proper pruning cut does not give enough information. The methods for planting a tree are helpful for container grown and bare-root trees, but the balled-and-burlapped section could be more fleshed out.

The best thing about this little book is its lists. The author has compiled several useful lists of various trees by desirable characteristics or suitability. For instance, you can quickly find information on trees that create shade (dappled and dense), favorite trees for wildlife, and trees for ornamental bark and colorful shoots.

All in all, this solid and none-too-intimidating guide is perfect for new homeowners who have just found themselves with a yard they don't know what to do with. This useful resource should get them off to a good start.

WHO GARDENS? Using recent data from the 1999-2000 National Gardening Survey (conducted by the Gallup Organization for the National Gardening Association, www.garden.org), we now have a clearer picture of who's gardening in the US these days. The demographic groups that rated highest in the survey include women (39.5%); the 30 to 49 age group (30.8%); those with a college degree (38.2%); and households with annual incomes over \$40,000.

As far as individual interests, there's also a clear move towards ornamental gardening in the US. Between 1994 and 1999, ornamental gardening grew by 6.9%, flower gardening by 1.8%, and container gardening by a whopping 6.4%. On the edible side, vegetable gardening grew by a modest 0.7%. But here's an interesting fact: herb gardening increased by an impressive 4.1%. Indeed, this is tasty data to chew on.

SMALL SNIPPERS. A recent issue of *Consumer Reports* magazine evaluated several hand-pruners for gardeners with small hands. The consumer-product organization tested four “bypass” pruners (i.e., standard scissor-type), all of which were less than 8 inches long and under a half pound in weight. Of all the models tested, the diminutive winners were the **Felco 6** (\$35) and the **Fiskars PowerGear 7936** (\$22), both proving to be comfortable and versatile enough to cut everything from perennial stems to sizable woody branches. So if you haven't asked “Santa” for that special stocking stuffer yet, here's a golden opportunity.





Christmas naturally

Using Berries and
Greens to
Liven up Your
Holiday Arrangements

Story by Lorraine Kiefer
Photography by Harry Kalish & Pete Prown

When it's December and growing cold outside, many gardeners retreat indoors for warmth and holiday preparations. Instead, I go back out to the garden. When winter comes and the hours of daylight grow fewer each day, I need to be outdoors—and to bring the outdoors in. It is time for wonderful winter walks to collect materials for holiday decorations. December gardens, fields and woods are like a banquet table laden with colorful treats (birds and animals think so, too). The leaves are gone, so bright berries and pods are visible everywhere. These are all fodder for beautiful wreaths, centerpieces, and more.



The Berries of Winter

I love to walk in winter, and, when on a “foraging walk,” I’ll likely find berries—*lots* of them. Holly berries, bayberries, beautyberries, cedar berries, nandina berries, bittersweet berries, partridge berries and teaberries can all be found in various parts of our region. Then there are all the “berries” that are not called berries, like rose hips, chokeberries, drupes and fruits of so many other plants found in our gardens. Many of these are red, which makes them all the more beautiful when hot-glued to wreaths alongside shiny, fresh evergreens.

The berry clusters of American holly (*Ilex opaca*) were so abundant last year that I plucked off the leaves to showcase just the vibrant red or gold berries. Deciduous hollies like the winterberry (*Ilex verticillata*) lose their leaves to reveal outrageously beautiful red berries. A handsome stand of winterberry holly grows across the creek



CHRISTMAS NATURAL

from my house and is only accessible by canoe. For years when our sons were growing up, they would take turns on wintry days paddling me over in a canoe so I could precariously lean into the shrubs and cut branches. Luckily, we never capsized! (Now we have planted more of them along the near side of the stream.)

Bayberries (*Myrica pensylvanica*) were also profuse, with the plants in the sun producing the most berries. Birds spread them all over the ground under towering trees. We gather these fragrant, waxy berries to use in fresh arrangements with bayberry candles. They keep well and will dry and last for years. I sometimes glue them to swags or wreaths for a beautiful, fragrant touch. *Nandina domestica* also grows happily in my garden and produces pretty, colorful foliage, but I especially love its showy, conical-shaped red berry clusters. And the ice-blue berry of the native cedar tree (*Juniperus virginiana*) adds an extraordinary blue accent to winter arrangements. They keep well in fresh containers or on wreaths or swags. The cedars found in sunny, sandy fields produce the most berries, which are relished by wildlife.

A favorite of bluebirds, the brightly colored berries of firethorn (*Pyracantha* sp.) can't be beat. I start to use them around Thanksgiving along with small gourds. Dark red berry clusters from highland sumac (*Rhus typhina*)—not the poisonous variety—add beauty to wreaths and arrangements. These grow in vacant lots, sandy dry fields or in a sunny, well-drained location. The crimson drupes seem to keep forever if the birds don't get them.

Using Fresh Greens

You can pick most evergreens during November and December for winter decorations. My very favorite evergreen, concolor fir (*Abies concolor*), has a fresh citrus scent. Its long lasting, gray green needles look terrific in wreaths or arrangements. And it makes you feel wonderful when you use it and your hands smell so delightful. Another extraordinary green, Hinoki false



CHRISTMAS WITH NATURE



Top: The Mugo pine 'Mr. Mughus'.

Middle: Winterberry holly

Bottom: Several of Lorraine's "natural" holiday wreaths.



Birdwatcher's Wreath

One of my favorite wreaths—and the one that students like to make in our wreath class—is the “birdwatcher’s wreath.”

We start with a mixed-greens wreath of fragrant concolor fir, spruce, pine, cedar, and arborvitae.

We decorate the wreath with things that birds like to eat. These include clusters of rose hips, sumac, holly, nandina, persimmons, crabapples, bittersweet, wheat, black-eyed Susan seed heads, apple slices, miniature corns, various cones, nuts, and seed pods. Just for fun, we add a few lifelike birds.

I can’t resist trimming the birdwatcher’s wreath with a red velvet or plaid bow before hanging it on our door. The birds think it is an extension of the feeder, and it is not unusual to see chickadees, titmice or even a cardinal posing on it, turning the wreath into a living Christmas card. The wreath can be replenished when the birds eat everything on the menu. It’s a nice winter decoration and can be moved to another spot in the garden and left up until late winter.

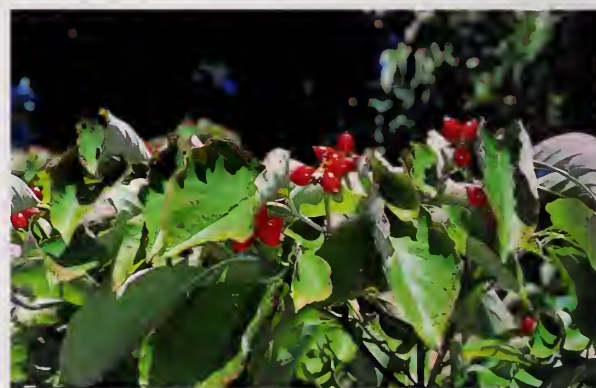
CHRISTMAS NATURALITY



Top: Japanese beautyberry in fall

Middle: *Ilex decidua* ‘Sentry’

Bottom: Dogwood berries in early fall.



cypress (*Chamaecyparis obtusa*), adds charm to any arrangement. I use the vibrant, dark green branches all year long.

In the spruce (*Picea* sp.) family, I like the bright green Norway spruce (*P. abies*) best for wreaths, as it is less bulky and seems to last longer than some of the others. Blue spruce, for example, lasts better on outdoor wreaths. Fragrant white pine (*Pinus strobus*) also lasts a long time. If you have some of the more unusual pines, such as the bristlecone pine (*P. aristata*) or mugo



CHRISTMAS NATURALLY

Ilex × *meserve* 'Honey Maid'

pine (*P. mugo*) with short needles, they too will add interest to your wreath or arrangement.

Soft and fragrant Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) is easy to use, but keep in mind that its color is not as vivid, so it looks best mixed with a variety of other greens. And I could never decorate in December without cutting bundles of fragrant, graceful arborvitae (*Thuja occidentalis*). As its name implies, "tree of life" is a long lasting, aromatic addition to winter wreaths or bouquets.

Most of the junipers (*Juniperus* sp.)—commonly used for foundation plantings—find their way into my arrangements. Remember—snipping off branches here and there can only help your plants, so don't be afraid to cut them! For a blue touch to wreaths, add 'Blue Chip' or one of the many other blue junipers.

The deep, intense green of yews (*Taxus* sp.) will also add a contrasting shade to arrangements, and oriental plum yew (*T. cephalotaxus*) will gracefully drape over the edge of containers. If you have evergreen magnolias (*Magnolia grandiflora*) or skimmia (*Skimmia japonica*), their shiny leaves will add an interesting texture to your arrangements.

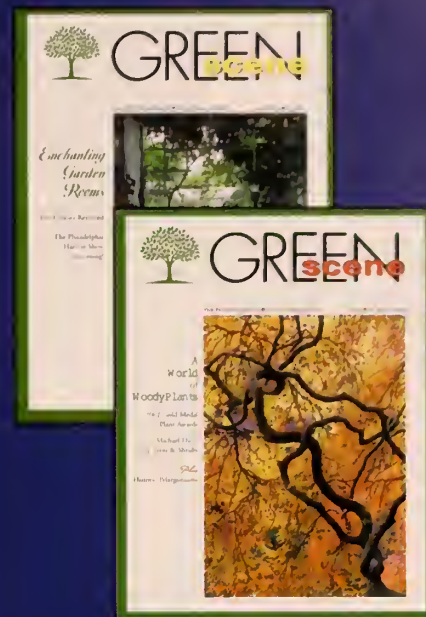
Keeping It Fresh

To keep your greens looking nice, do not allow them to dry out. Keep them outdoors as long as possible. For floral arrangements, re-cut stems and keep them in water with some floral preservative. You will be surprised how long they last. Greens used outdoors do not need to be kept in water. I heap branches in an old wheelbarrow along the walk and also in an old wooden bucket by the door, and they keep well into spring.

It is surprising how many wonderful treasures you can find in a short walk around your yard, in the woods or a field. Nothing beats getting outside at this time of the year, when we all could use some fresh air and sunshine. I love collecting greens and berries in the late afternoon and finishing at dusk.

As you're tramping home with a basket of greens hanging on the crook of your arm, you can't help but enjoy this time of the year—no matter what the temperature. To me, it's winter at its best. ☺

Lorraine Kieffer is a garden writer, teacher and proprietor of Triple Oaks Nursery in Franklinville, New Jersey (www.tripleoaks.com).



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The Monarda



A Look at New Mildew-Resistant Varieties

by Patricia A. Taylor

For years I had a love-hate relationship with bee balms and other members of the genus *Monarda*. I loved them for their striking array of flower colors—plush purples, scarlet reds, soft pinks, and bright whites—and for their kinky flower shapes, in which the petals spray out to form a punk rocker's dream of a perfect hairdo, and then gradually fall to create an image of a tonsured monk seen from the rear.

Left: *Monarda* 'Marshall's Delight'

Revisited



Agriculture Canada—Morden

They also won points for their long bloom period, starting in early July in my gardens and, with a judicious snipping of spent blossoms, continuing into late August. Furthermore, I find the flowers to be long lasting in bouquets, and the dark brown, rounded seed heads attractive in dry arrangements.

Conversely, I hated them for their aggressive spreading and, most of all, for their susceptibility to powdery mildew. Its chalky gray, ugly coating usually appears just as the flowers open and can be so severe at times that plants are defoliated and ultimately die. The mildew literally blasts all the genus's good qualities away.

Then, last winter, I saw a doe and two fawns strolling down my street for the first time and knew my gardening activities would never be the same. My first reaction was to yell at them, effectively sending them to someone else's property. My second reaction was to give second thought to

the positive characteristics of monardas. That's because, as members of the mint family, they emit powerful, mint-like fragrances that arise from essential oils within both the leaves and flowers. These chemicals attract hummingbirds, butterflies, bees, and other nectar-seeking insects, but also tend to repel deer and other uninvited garden diners.

With deer in the picture, deer-resistant plants like monarda suddenly went to the top of my "must have" list. While I had been vaguely aware that there was some breeding work on developing mildew-resistant monardas, I now pursued this subject with a vengeance. In so doing, I learned that one of the most active centers for such research is at a Canadian government agriculture facility in Morden, Manitoba. Dr. Campbell Davidson, director of the facility, was more than happy to explain his program, in which thousands of seedlings are evaluated yearly for mildew resistance. Though deer regularly wander

through the acreage, he notes, they do not eat the plants.

To date, the Morden monarda program has introduced three beautiful plants to the garden trade. All are hybrids between *M. didyma* and *M. fistulosa*. 'Marshall's Delight' was the first of these mildew-resistant monardas to appear on the market. Named for its breeder, the late Henry Marshall, it is a 2- to 3-foot-tall plant and bears tight clusters of clear pink flowers for 4 to 6 weeks.

This plant has stood the test of time and trials. The trials occurred at the Chicago Botanic Garden from 1993 through 1996 and at the University of Vermont from 1994 through 1997. In Chicago, researchers evaluated 41 monarda cultivars for resistance to powdery mildew, plant health, flower production, and winter hardiness. 'Marshall's Delight' received the highest rating and was deemed the benchmark for measuring mildew resistance. 'Marshall's Delight' also topped the list for

Left: *Monarda*
'Petite Delight'

Right: *Monarda*
punctata

mildew resistance among the 17 cultivars studied in Vermont.

The two other Morden introductions—'Petite Delight' and 'Petite Wonder'—"are real breakthroughs in monarda breeding," says Dr. Davidson. Both are dwarfs with dark, glossy green foliage that is handsome in its own right. And the plants are clumpers, rather than spreaders. The stems are tightly packed and expand slowly as opposed to the vigorous romping of most other monardas.

'Petite Delight', which was not around when the Chicago Botanic monarda trials began, made horticultural headlines at its debut because it is the first dwarf monarda cultivar. Only 12 to 15 inches tall, it bears lavender pink flowers for 6 to 8 weeks. I bought one plant in 1998 and thriftily divided it into three. Each was sited in a well-drained, sunny location. In the ensuing five years, the clumps have slowly expanded to form circles now 18 inches in diameter.

Until this past summer, my 'Petite Delight' has only been dusted with a tad of mildew in late October or early November. This year, chalky gray spots began appearing in late August. Even then, the coating was so slight that the rich green foliage still looked handsome in the border.

'Petite Wonder' is the third Morden introduction and made its commercial appearance just two years ago. Only 10 to 12 inches tall, it is said to produce light pink flowers for 4 to 6 weeks. In my garden, however, this plant has not lived up to its advance publicity. The bloom period was only 2 weeks and the underlying leaves often browned and shriveled. Part of this poor part performance can be attributed to the plant's getting acclimated to my *laissez-faire* maintenance policy and to the hot,

Patricia A. Taylor



SOURCES

Forestfarm

990 Tetherow Road
Williams, OR 97544-9599
(541) 846-7269
catalog, \$4

Niche Gardens

1111 Dawson Road
Chapel Hill, NC 27516
(919) 967-0078
catalog, \$3.

We-Du Nursery

Rt. 5, Box 724
Marion, NC 28752-9338
(828) 738-8300
catalog, \$2.



Top: Monarda selections at Morden Research Station in Manitoba, Canada. **Left:** *Monarda* 'Raspberry Wine'



Patricia A. Taylor

dry summer of this past year. Furthermore, Dr. Campbell says that field reports indicate 'Petite Wonder' is subject to root rot if not given perfect drainage. All that aside, I must add that the flower color is beautiful and I hope that the plant will perform better next year.

In an interview, Dr. Campbell emphasized that the Morden breeding program produces plants that are known to resist only early and mid-season mildew. By September, he says, frosts in his area "north of North Dakota" have flattened all plants before any susceptibility to late-season mildew can be observed. He also noted that the powdery mildew pathogen assumes different forms in different areas. Thus, a monarda could flourish unscathed in a New England garden while becoming an ugly, infected mess in a southern setting.



Kim Hawks of Niche Gardens in North Carolina is very much aware of the geographical nature of an individual plant's susceptibility to mildew. Three years ago she found a stand of white bee balm (*M. clinopodia*) growing mildew-free along the Blue Ridge Parkway. She collected seed and with great expectation propagated the 3- to 4-foot-tall plant, whose white flowers are decorated with tiny purple spots.

"What a disappointment," she observed last spring, "to see mildew on the plants in my lower Piedmont-area nursery when they were clean as a whistle in the humid mountain location." I obtained a plant before Hawks withdrew it from her catalog and didn't spot any mildew on it this past year. In its place, Hawks is offering 'Bryan Thompson', a beautiful, 3- to 4-foot-tall, white-flowered *M. didyma* form found growing near Tyler, Texas. Its major drawback, as far as I'm concerned, is that it is only hardy in zones 7 to 9.

Northern gardeners hunting for a hint of *Monarda* white may be interested in *M. bradburniana*, which Bill Cullina, of the New England Wildflower Society, reviewed at the Perennial Plant Association's 2000 New Plant Forum. Growing 16 to 24 inches tall and hardy throughout zones 4 to 8, it features dark green leaves and blush white flowers. "It blooms a full month earlier than other monardas," Cullina said, "and has good mildew resistance."

Hawks has long liked and grown 'Raspberry Wine', a monarda hybrid of mixed parentage. It has been a standout in my humid summer borders for 10 years. The luscious wine red flowers, crowning 3- to 4-foot-tall plants, open for nine or more weeks. In October, pinkish-purple tints appear on the leaves, which survive light

frosts and are decorative in flower arrangements. Though 'Raspberry Wine' was a star performer in the Chicago Botanic Garden trials and has rarely developed mildew in my Princeton gardens, a friend 10 miles north of me reports that the foliage is consistently splashed with mildew by early fall.

Stephanie Cohen, adjunct professor in Temple University's Department of Horticulture, told me about one monarda that will fend off mildew all season long no matter what area of the country it is grown in. Sold as either 'Jacob Cline' or 'Jacob Kline', it is a 4-foot-tall *M. didyma* plant with large, crimson red flowers. She also recommends 'Claire Grace', an *M. fistula* selection found growing with barely a trace of mildew in Tylertown, Mississippi. It tops out at 4 feet and features soft lavender flowers.

Reviews are mixed as far as mildew and *M. punctata* are concerned. Even though some sources say it is prone to a late summer coating, I'm thinking about reintroducing it to my garden. I grew it in the summer of 1991 and for over a month—from mid-August to mid-September—it decorated my borders, mildew free, with its colorful pink, yellow, and purple flowers and bracts topping 2- to 3-foot-tall stems.

Alternately described as an annual, biennial, or perennial, *M. punctata* behaved as an annual for me. Should I grow it again, I will definitely give it room to self-seed. That way, I can give the seedlings to my neighbors, thus somewhat assuaging my guilt for chasing deer from my property to theirs. ☐

Patricia A. Taylor is a long-time contributor to *Green Scene* and the author of *Easy Care Native Plants* (Holt).

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All Across the City

BY JANE CARROLL
AND JOHN GANNON

A LOOK AT THE IMPACT OF PHILADELPHIA GREEN



Philadelphia Green, a program of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, is widely recognized as the nation's largest and most comprehensive urban-greening program. Since the mid-1970s, it has brought people together to create gardens, revitalize neighborhood parks, and beautify public spaces throughout Philadelphia. Most recently, Philadelphia Green has also begun working with the Mayor's office and other partners on tackling the City's vacant-land problem, a major contributor to "urban blight."

Philadelphia Green projects have touched every corner of the City, proving the power of horticulture to enhance the quality of life and bring communities together. Here, we spotlight a few ongoing projects.

COMMUNITY GARDENS

Philadelphia Green is probably best known for helping residents start and maintain community gardens, ranging in size from single rowhouse lots to entire city blocks. As of this past spring, Philadelphia Green supports 940 community flower and vegetable gardens throughout Philadelphia, along with another 195 "tree lots" (neighborhood green spaces or sitting gardens).

In North Philadelphia's Susquehanna neighborhood, the staff works closely with **GLENWOOD GREEN ACRES 1**, one of the largest community gardens in the City. Glenwood was created in 1984, when the City demolished an entire complex of warehouses along the 1800 block of Glenwood Avenue, which had been destroyed by fire. Neighbors living across the street jumped on the opportunity to start a garden on the four-acre site (which has been preserved as permanent open space with help from the Neighborhood Gardens Association, a PHS affiliate). By the garden's third season in 1986, nearly 90 plots were flourishing. Philadelphia Green has since provided fencing, a watering system, a trellis, patio, benches, and additional plant material, as well as ongoing technical support.

With its active and committed gardeners, Glenwood Green Acres has, not surprisingly, won numerous prizes in the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's City Gardens Contest and Philadelphia Harvest Show. Philadelphia Green often brings tour groups to the garden and holds horticultural workshops there. And since some of Glenwood's members have roots in the deep South, they host workshops on Southern agricultural heritage and grow demonstration crops of tobacco, cotton, and peanuts. Today, Glenwood Green Acres remains a jewel of its neighborhood and a superb model of a thriving community garden.

PARKS

Well-cared-for urban parks provide a welcomed respite from the busy pace of city life and serve a vital function as neighborhood focal points. Philadelphia Green's **Parks Revitalization Project**, with the City's Department of Recreation as a key partner, works with volunteer park groups throughout Philadelphia to reclaim these community gathering places.

In West Philadelphia, for example, **Malcolm X Memorial Park 2** has undergone a dramatic transformation. Located at

John Gouker



1) RESIDENT GARDENER JAMES TAYLER CHECKS THE CORN CROP AT GLENWOOD GREEN ACRES

2) VOLUNTEERS HELP BAG LEAVES AT MALCOLM X PARK



Ira Beckoff

3) CENTER CITY WINDOWBOXES





4) A Patriotic Planting at Penn's Landing

John Gannon

to redevelop and enhance the landscape of this popular destination. Landscapers have relocated large trees and shrubs to the Festival Pier near Spring Garden Street (the current site for outdoor events). Philadelphia Green oversees maintenance of the existing plantings throughout the Penn's Landing area, as well as the median plantings along Columbus Boulevard.

At the site of the former Philadelphia Naval Yard in South Philadelphia, Philadelphia Green's Public Landscapes staff serves as the horticultural consultant on the **League Island Boulevard** project 5 (not pictured). Curving east of Broad Street amid views of enormous ships, towering dockside cranes, and long vistas of the Delaware River, the new boulevard—where 334 trees and 3,270 shrubs and perennials have been planted—will provide access to the Naval Business Center that is taking shape at the end of Broad Street.

A lush assemblage of mostly native plants greets visitors at the Center's entrance, while a variety of trees lines the Boulevard, including red and sugar maples, white and shingle oaks, lindens and hackberries. Alma Plummer, project manager with the Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation, is thrilled with the new landscape. "We view this as an excellent way to attract new investment," she says. "It's a new front door for the 4,000 people who already work here, and a great way to entice more businesses to join them."

51st & Pine Streets, the park was long a hot spot of drug activity and prostitution and a neighborhood eyesore. But a group of dedicated neighbors formed the Friends of Malcolm X Park, and with years of hard work and support from Philadelphia Green, they brought the park back into the community fold.

This past summer, Malcolm X Park caught the attention of district City Councilwoman Jannie Blackwell, who helped secure a large grant for major improvements from the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, as well as other city funding. Now, the park includes a gazebo, a playground for children, and new benches and lighting. It has once again become an inviting place for relaxation and recreation.

PUBLIC SPACES

A beautifully landscaped downtown improves the quality of life for residents and leaves visitors with a positive impression of Philadelphia. In Center City, Philadelphia Green has for the last two years sponsored a program that enabled hundreds of downtown homeowners to purchase **windowboxes** 3 overflowing with trailing vines and brightly colored annuals. "You can really see the impact when you walk along Center City's residential blocks," says Julie Snell, who coordinated the project.

At **Penn's Landing** 4, the waterfront area along the Delaware River, Philadelphia Green is working with the Penn's Landing Corporation

VACANT LAND

In North Philadelphia, Philadelphia Green is developing a strategy for dealing with abandoned vacant land—one of the most vexing problems facing older, former-industrial American cities with shrinking populations. In April 2000, Philadelphia Green was asked to develop and manage a vacant land stabilization program in North Philadelphia's **American Street Empowerment Zone** 6. Over two years, 40 sites—four acres of abandoned, debris-filled lots—were cleaned and stabilized with a basic landscape treatment of grass and tree plantings. More recently, another five acres of derelict land have been "cleaned and greened," vastly improving the appearance of these neighborhoods. "The 'clean and green' strategy will serve as a model for the City as it implements Mayor Street's Neighborhood Transformation Initiative," notes PHS executive vice-president J. Blaine Bonham, Jr.

Four community-based organizations from neighborhoods within the Empowerment Zone are collaborating with Philadelphia Green to reclaim these neglected lots—the Women's Community Revitalization Project, Norris Square Civic Association, Kensington South Community Development Corporation, and Asociación de Puertorriqueños en Marcha.

"For cities to be
dynamic and livable,
there has to be a good mix
of natural elements
and attractive space
in which to live and work."

— Gayle Berens
& Kathleen Blaha

TREE-PLANTING PROJECTS

Philadelphia Green's Tree Tenders training workshops aim to develop self-sustaining volunteer groups to care for neighborhood street trees. Participants learn not only about tree care and managing their community's "urban forest," but also how to raise their own funds and build a stronger organization. "We train people to be self-reliant," says project manager Mindy Maslin. "Then, we can act as advisors or mentors when needed."

Last March, eight Tree Tender groups—along with residents and students—planted dozens of trees in University City to create the **Walnut Street Greenway 7** between 43rd and 48th Streets. The project was organized by University City Green, a program of the University of Pennsylvania, in consultation with Philadelphia Green. The staff, along with arborist Hal Rosner from Bartlett Tree Experts Co., held special training sessions on the Penn campus for 90 volunteer team leaders. Hundreds of volunteers showed up for the all-day tree-planting extravaganza.

And, along the eastern end of Main Street in the City's **Manayunk 8** section (not pictured), Philadelphia Green is

working with the City's Department of Streets on another installation of street trees, providing technical assistance and plant consultation. The trees will go in along the parking lot of the United Artists movie theater, as well as further down the street near the Arthur Ashe Youth Tennis Center.

LOOKING FORWARD

As Gayle Berens & Kathleen Blaha noted in their 1997 book, *Urban Parks and Open Space*, "The most pleasant and appealing city neighborhoods—and the ones we want to live in—are almost always those that have well-tended, tree-lined boulevards and neighborhood parks full of people using them. For cities to be dynamic and livable, there has to be a good mix of natural elements and attractive space in which to live and work." In essence, this sums up the long-term goals of the Society's urban-greening program—using horticulture to improve the quality of life in Philadelphia, creating a more livable, vital city for generations to come. 🌳

6) AMERICAN STREET
EMPOWERMENT ZONE
(BEFORE...)

...AND AFTER CLEAN-UP)

7) TREE TENDERS PLANT TREES AT
THE WALNUT STREET GREENWAY

Margaret Funderburg

Sylvia Barkin



Perennial *Pleasures*



Allan Armitage on
Great Plants for the
Mid-Atlantic Garden

By Pamela D. Jacobsen

Allan Armitage is truly a man for all seasons...and gardens. A renowned horticultural authority, he is the author of over 250 papers and articles, along with seven books. His latest is *Garden Perennials: A Color Encyclopedia*. Complementing this are his CD-ROM sets, *Allan M. Armitage's PhotoLibrary of Herbaceous Plants* and *The Interactive Guide to Herbaceous Perennials*. Armitage also travels extensively and is in great demand as a lecturer and consultant. In the following interview, he shares his thoughts on the best—and worst—perennials for our region.

Top Left: Virginia bluebells

Top Right: *Verbena* 'Homestead Purple' with red coral bells.

Bottom: *Echinacea* 'Kim's Knee High' (coneflower) with the Shasta daisy, *Leucanthemum superbum* 'Becky'

What perennials do you especially recommend for the Mid-Atlantic garden?

I would start with some of the fine natives for the shade. I certainly recommend the bloodroots (*Sanguinaria* sp.), maidenhair ferns (*Adiantum* sp.), and wood poppies (*Stylophorum diphyllum*).

Virginia bluebells (*Mertensia virginica*) will also do just fine. They're marvelous plants that work well in the shade—you just can't go wrong with them. You can't go wrong with native columbines either. If I had to choose one columbine, I'd select *Aquilegia canadensis*. It doesn't have the pizzazz of



many of the hybrids, but boy, it's a perfect plant and it re-seeds readily.

For sun, I like some of the newer varieties of purple coneflowers (*Echinacea purpurea*), like 'Kim's Kneehigh', which is a great dwarf form of coneflower. It's also hard not to like *Gaura*. There's one called 'Siskiyou Pink'. It's a tough, tough plant. *Baptisia* is another great one. The blue variety, *B. australis*, is more of an eastern native, but you can also use some of the midwestern natives that tolerate cold temperatures and warm summers. There are yellow, white, and blue baptisias and hybrids in between. They're spring flowers and tend to stop blooming in summer, but they still have good foliage in the fall, and the fruit is attractive, too.

Ornamental grasses do very well in the Mid-Atlantic states. There are so many great ones, but *Hakonechloa*—the Hakone grass—is particularly good. It's one of the few grasses for shade, but it also tolerates a fair amount of sun. However, some of the ornamental grasses are becoming a little aggressive, like the *Miscanthus* grass. It's starting to re-seed a little too invasively for some people's taste, specifically *Miscanthus sinensis*.

Plains false indigo
(*Baptista australis*)

How about flowering plants for the fall?

There are many plants that bloom nicely in the fall—*Ceratostigma*, the blue plumbago, for example. It has a terrible name, *C. plumbaginoides*, which means looking like a plumbago. It grows to 2 feet tall and can be used as a groundcover. Asters do just fine and they go from dwarf form to 4 to 5 feet tall. Many salvias flower in the fall, too. And some summer-flowering plants, when cut back, will bloom again. Shasta daisies do that—especially one called 'Becky'. Many Shastas decline terribly after the summer, but 'Becky' is a good one. The Korean mums flower in late fall and are much better than the mums you buy at K-Mart. Korean mums have some wonderful colors, too. There's one called 'Apricot Single' that I really like.

Are there any plants that haven't met your expectations?

The Perennial Plant Association gave an award to *Echinacea* 'Magnus', and it's supposed to have parallel petals that are hanging down. But you see many 'Magnus' being sold with the petals hanging down, straight, or pointing every which way. That's because people propagate it from seed. I think we could pick a better award-winner than 'Magnus'.

Are there any plants you don't recommend for the Mid-Atlantic?

It's my philosophy that there is no such thing as a bad plant—just a bad use of a good plant. Take the chameleon plant, *Houttuynia*. It came out with a big bang and everyone wanted it, but there are a lot of bad uses for that plant! It stinks, it's aggressive, it's a thug, and it burns up in the heat. It's a variegated plant with many lovely colors on the foliage, but if it gets warm, it goes back to straight green. That's

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a pretty awful plant for a region with hot summers.

Ligularia, the leopard plant, is a very difficult plant for most gardeners, particularly in the Mid-Atlantic, because it requires a lot of moisture and does poorly in the heat. I would never have one anywhere in my garden.

Sedum 'Autumn Joy' was a great plant because it was different and very tough. But now it's becoming a bad plant because people start it from seed and it doesn't grow true. So it's not the same plant it was when it was first introduced. Then again, I certainly don't know everything, but I have my opinions and you can disagree with me—lots of people do!

Bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*)

Are gardeners becoming more environmentally conscious?

I think gardeners, in general, are environmentally conscious. Environmentally conscious means different things to different people. To native plant enthusiasts, it means nothing but native plants. To many gardeners, it means no chemicals should be used—and I agree, if you can do it. Without a doubt, we are using far fewer chemicals in the garden and we are better gardeners for it.

What do you feel has been the impact of your books and lectures on the perennial plant world?

Well, it's hard to be objective, but I think both Mike [Dr. Michael Dirr, interviewed in the October 2001 issue] and I have made a difference in the perennial world. In my opinion, it's because of our enthusiasm and love of the subject. I think we convey a love of plants and a love of gardening. And we keep it simple and keep it humorous. You can get way too complicated with this stuff . . . it's just gardening! ☐

Pamela D. Jacobsen is a garden writer who lives in Massachusetts.

Do you see any trends on the horizon?

I see a major trend back towards annuals—not bedding plants like petunias, marigolds and begonias—but specialty annuals. The new breeds of *Osteospermum*, *Argyranthemum* and *Calibrachoa*, for example, are becoming popular all over the country.

Container gardening is another trend. Many people like the idea of putting plants in big containers, not just hanging baskets, but large containers that provide color and texture. Many of the new plants I talked about—the specialty annuals—grow happily in containers.

Rugosa roses are making a comeback. We've also introduced a number of plants from our program [at the University of Georgia, Athens], including *Verbena* 'Homestead Purple', which became the

top-selling verbena in this country. I also introduced 'Marguerita', a sweet potato vine. It will grow absolutely anywhere; I've even seen it up in Montreal. It's a great annual with chartreuse yellow foliage and does very well in the heat.

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All Photos by Pete Prown

SAVORING HERBS

Sage Advice

The herbal branch of the *Salvia* family is associated with longevity, wisdom, and mental acuity. *Salvia*'s name comes from the Latin *salvar*—to be saved, as well as *salvus*—whole, safe, healthy. The toast “salut” means “to your health.” We seek “sage advice” and refer to our elders as “sages.” A member of the mint family (and the International Herb Association's 2001 Herb of the Year), sage has been highly valued for centuries for its medicinal and cosmetic properties. But it has great culinary uses, too.

Culture

Grow culinary sages in sunny locations with well-drained soil and good air circulation. Water well until plants are established; after that, most need very little water. Depending on where you live in the Delaware Valley, culinary varieties range from hardy to not hardy in Zone 6, but fair better in Zone 7 and warmer. Common and purple sages can last for a few years and then suddenly disappear. To help them out, give them a protected location and good drainage. Sage resents the combination of cold temperatures with wet soil.

Tender species can be overwintered in a greenhouse or cool sun room. Russell Gardens keeps containerized plants in a greenhouse heated at 40° to 50°F. Primex Garden Center uses a mixture of 2/3

ProMix and 1/3 Bacto potting soil for their potted plants, letting them dry out a little between watering.

Varieties

Many gardeners and cooks know only the common garden sage (*Salvia officinalis*), the poultry seasoning and herb-garden favorite with gray-green foliage. Here are a few other interesting varieties to try. Some are hardy and others labeled as tender, but all are worth the effort.

Berggarten sage (*Salvia officinalis* ‘Berggarten’): an exceptional German variety with large silver-gray leaves. A rounded bushy plant growing to 18 inches. Hardy.



By Alexandra Basinski

Pete Prown

Dwarf garden sage (*S. officinalis* ‘Nana’): 12-inch dwarf version of common culinary sage. Hardy.

Golden sage (*S. officinalis* ‘Aurea’): 18-inch plant with ornamental gold and green variegated leaves and pungent aroma.

Lavender-scented sage (*S. officinalis* sp.): 8 to 12-inch plants with silvery green leaves that tightly hug the ground. Used in potpourri.

Tricolor sage (*S. officinalis* ‘Tricolor’): 2-foot-high plant with finely wrinkled leaves of cream, pink, gray-green and purple.

Purple sage (*S. officinalis* ‘Purpurascens’): 18-inch plant with reddish-purple leaves. Hardy.

Fruit-scented sage (*Salvia* sp.): 3-foot plant with large, fuzzy, lime-green leaves, nectarine and peach aroma and bright magenta flowers.

Honeydew-melon sage/Tangerine sage (*Salvia elegans* cv.): small, oval leaves have a strong melon/tangerine aroma. Spikes of mid- to late-season red flowers. Grows to 3 feet.

Pineapple sage (*S. elegans*): Bright green, pineapple-scented leaves on heavily downy stems with scarlet, late-season flowers. Grows to 3 to 6 feet.

Sage in the Kitchen

- Add chopped fresh or dried sage to tomato and cheese or grilled chicken sandwiches
- Toss pasta with chopped sage, garlic oil, and lightly sauteed vegetables
- Add 1 tablespoon of chopped fresh or 1 teaspoon dried sage to your favorite cornbread or biscuit recipe.
- Add fruit sage and opal basil leaves to your spring salad mix.
- Sprinkle sage around the pan when roasting pork or poultry.
- Fruit sages make excellent hot or cold teas. ☞

Alexandra Basinski is a local writer who gardens in Jenkintown, PA.

SOURCES

Ashcombe Herb Farm, Mechanicsburg, PA
(717) 766-7611 www.achcombe.com

Primex Garden Center, Glenside, PA
(215) 887-7500

Triple Oaks Nursery, Franklinville, NJ
(856) 694-4272 www.tripleoaks.com

ORGANIC MATTERS

Confessions of a Weed Lover

Embracing the inevitable might be the single best approach to any endeavor, gardening or otherwise. I followed this advice this past year when I befriended several luxuriant weeds that pushed up in my beds. With a ferocity that I only wished my other plants would emulate, these typically unwelcome guests demonstrated why they will always be with us—for better or worse.

A single white sweet clover (*Melilotus alba*) became a towering 8-foot spire by the driveway. Unsure of its identity, I waited for the long tapering flower spikes to appear before I could give it a name. The tiny white leguminous blooms quickly became a bee magnet and vibrated with hovering ben-

Pictured at left, pokeweed (*Phytolacca americana*) has always been a favorite of mine, and this season, I allowed a large one to dominate a dry perennial border. Long after its bedmates (a cast iron collection of daylilies, phlox and yarrows) wilted during the August heat, these handsome stalks produced an umbrella of panicked purple fruit on magenta stems that danced above the fence pickets. I know how much the birds will relish these treats, even though they're poisonous to our more delicate innards. Pokeweed also has fans at Chanticleer, where it's partnered with cannas for contrast.

Purslane (*Portulaca oleracea*) has been taking hold in my vegetable plot and, this year, I wasn't overly concerned. With fleshy leaves and stems, this succulent groundcover spread all over the fertile soil under my tomatoes and peppers. Like a living mulch, it kept other more obnoxious weeds from developing and helped retain soil moisture. And purslane is healthy for you, too—its crunchy, citrusy leaves contain a high level of Omega-3 fatty acids, making them a nutritious addition to salads and sandwiches.

I've always admired the soft green, spinach-like foliage of lamb's quarter (*Chenopodium album*) and find it a pleasant foil to my climbing roses out front. A mild-flavored green with more calcium than broccoli, the tender leaves taste great steamed or tossed into a stirfry.

Even though I've made my peace with a few weeds, I won't tolerate others that try to gain footholds. I won't permit nutsedge, ground ivy, poison ivy or any thistles (although I've seen some stunning *Onopordum* plants in more than a few botanical gardens). And I won't harbor any potentially invasive species that threaten native ecosystems, such as garlic mustard, purple loosestrife, Japanese knotweed, multiflora rose, Oriental bittersweet and Japanese honeysuckle, to name a few.

But every year I seem to find a few new faces in the spring soil. And just out of botanical curiosity, I'll let one or two go until I know who they are. With no encouragement from me, they often take center stage, showing the nearby cultivars how to really convert soil, sun and water into magnificent towers of chlorophyll. Their resilience gives me comfort and their variety gives me delight. More than that, I'll always have something green to greet me in the daylight. 🌱

Writer-photographer Rob Cardillo has written for *Organic Gardening*, *Country Living Garden*, and *Better Homes and Gardens*.



By Rob Cardillo



Rob Cardillo

eficial insects during the long days of June.

Another newcomer to my yard was Virginia knotweed (*Persicaria virginiana*), an oversized, 6-foot octopus of a plant with bamboo-like arms that reached out to the neighboring cornflowers and zinnias. I admired its architectural presence, delicate tasseled floral tips, and its steadfastness during windstorms that threw the hollyhocks and cosmos into complete disarray.

BEGUILING BULBS

Bulbs on the Internet

Do not follow my example. My passion for bulbs has led me to use the Internet not only to seek more and more information about them, but also to find more geophytes to buy and grow. Over the past few years, I have purchased daffodils from Tasmania, clivia seeds from Japan, and plants from South Africa, as well as countless bulbs from all over the world that will not grow in this area without heroic measures.

For those of you who are more sensible, the Internet is simply a great place to find bulb-related information. There are two ways to do this. First, you can take the passive approach, "surfing" to websites that contain numerous links and pictures. Or you can participate actively in an email discussion forum, generally known as a "listserv."

Fascinating Websites

The International Bulb Society (IBS) has an incredible website, www.bulbsociety.org. Of special interest is its Gallery of Bulbs. With pull-down menus arranged alphabetically, one can go to "L" and find entries from *Lachenalia* to *Lycorus*. There are 41 entries for *Lachenalia* alone, with pictures and cultural information.

For *Clivia* (yes, clivia is considered a geophyte by the IBS), visit the website of the Clivia Society, based in South Africa (www.clivias.com). Within this site, you will find such interesting sub-sections as the Clivia Store, and some of the newest hybrids (such as a salmon-colored, open-flowered pendant, F2 hybrid named 'Chandelier').

For great daffodil pictures, sources, cultural information and more, look at the site of the American Daffodil Society (www.daffodilusa.org). One of the best lily websites can be found at LilyNet (www.camosun.bc.ca/~jbritton/netlil/lilynet-page.htm).

Online Discussions

To participate in a forum, one can subscribe to a listserv (usually at no cost, but the IBS requires a participant to take out a membership). On a listserv, you can ask questions, make comments and,

on some, send pictures—the listserv then emails these items out to all subscribers. (Warning: during the peak bloom season of certain bulbs, email will come in at an amazing rate as participants report on special blooms or seek advice for problems.) These listservs are international in scope, so one experiences two flushes of bloom—one from the northern hemisphere and one from the southern.

To subscribe to the IBS Bulb Forum, join the IBS through the website and follow instructions for signing up. As I write this in early September, threads of bulb discussions center on *Lycorus* and *Colchicum*. On LilyNet's forum (called Lilium), pictures abound of both hybrids and newly obtainable Chinese species. Every season brings discussions of problems such as deer, cats, *botrytis*, and mislabeled bulbs, as well as various methods of solving them. (One hot item at the moment is "Squirrel

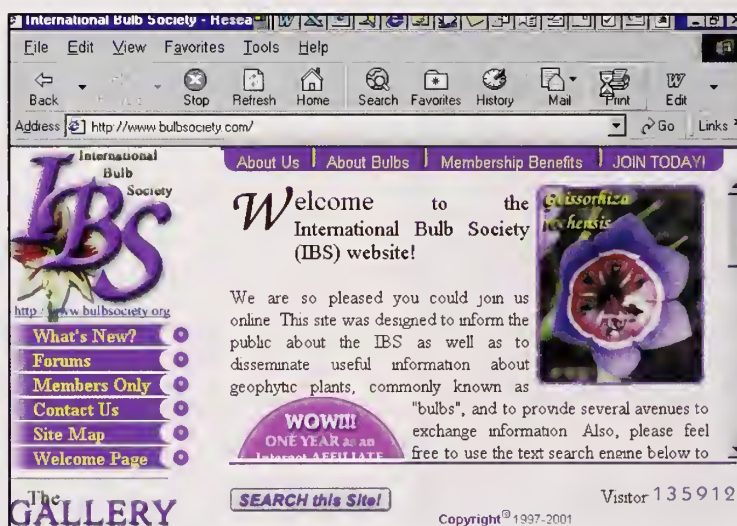
Away," a product found in the birdseed section at Wal-Mart.) To subscribe to this listserv, send a blank message to: Lilium-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

The clivia site's forum, the Clivia Enthusiast, has incredible pictures of new hybrids and all the South African species, so many that it is difficult to resist placing orders with purveyors worldwide. You'll find hints for container growing that suggest ways to initiate bloom (cold and dry for several months in the fall and early winter), or for dealing with blooms on scapes that have not yet risen above the foliage. To subscribe, send a blank message to: clivia-enthusiast-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Finally, Daffnet deals with growing hybrid and species daffodils. Like the other groups, this forum is definitely international. At the end of August, *N. cyclamineus* was beginning to bloom in New Zealand, while we were just starting to think about fall bulb planting here. To sign up, go to: <http://daffodilusa.org/listinfo/daffnet/>

Joining these listservs is as easy as clicking your mouse and, once done, you'll be instantly hooked into a world-wide web of fellow bulb enthusiasts. ☐

Kathryn Andersen is a bulb expert who lives in Delaware.



By Kathryn Andersen

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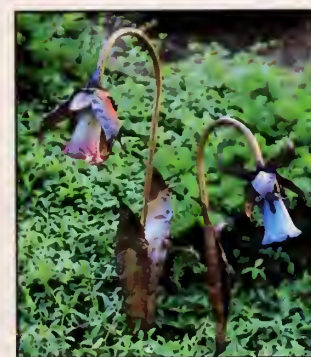
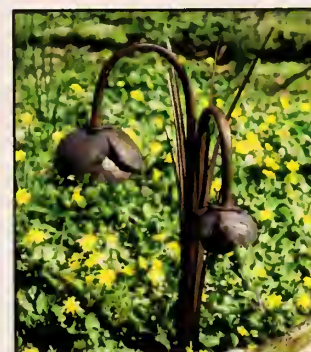
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Bags of fresh soil, vermiculite too
A gardening apron, some clay pots so new.
A bee skep, a bird house, some birdseed and more,
That sweet little elf had trucked to my door.

Dear Santa, I thank you. My gifts are so great—
Almost makes up for the cookies you ate.
Now as to those catalogs soon to appear,
I've been a good girl the whole blessed year.

My wish list is huge, my money is low
I need new annual seeds I can sow.
Some perennials, shrubs, a fruit tree or two—
I'll just tell them to mail the whole bill to you!

Wheel barrow, seed starter, composteur and more,
Which your strong little reindeer can haul to my door.
A trellis for roses, a greenhouse, a hose
New wellies to cover my gardener's toes.

So thank you, dear Santa, you really do rate.
(Did I forget to mention a new garden gate?)
Alas, my list is too long, and your schedule is tight
So Merry Christmas to all...and to all a good night!

—Ronny F. Kosempel



Illustration by Patrick King

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